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REVIEWS

44 TIE Fighter

DON'T MISS OUT on your chance to fight for the Dark Side in the latest classic from the LucasArts stable.

50 Theatre Of Death

NO IT'S GOT nothing to do with Andrew Lloyd Webber – just don't mention Canon Fodder, Okay?

59 Harpoon 2

IS IT BETTER than the original? Well it's packed full of the latest naval hardware and it's got more "plink, plinks" than a box of Alcazeltzer.

63 On The Ball

THERE ARE NOW more footie management sims available for the PC than mating guerrillas in southern Venezuela. Is *On The Ball* really on the ball?



68 D-Day

YOU TOO CAN fight them on the beaches and re-create the longest day with this battle sim from Impressions.

72 Soccer Kid

HE'S CUTE AND boy can he shoot, but can he leap tall buildings and knock-out nasties in this platform game with a twist?

74 Wargame Construction Kit: Tanks 2

TANKS A MILLION! Well, 22 of the things actually and more battle scenarios to roll over than you can shake a muddy stick at.

78 Inherit The Earth: Quest for the Orb

IT'S GOT MORE puzzles and animals dressed in strange period clothing than your average adventure and not a fluffy cloud in sight.



80 Metal & Lace: Battle of the Robo Babes

FANCY FIGHTING IT OUT with a wide-eyed Robo Babe from the other side of town? Relief is at hand, but don't say we didn't warn you.

CD ROM REVIEWS

88 Outpost

PLANET EARTH is doomed for destruction! Grab your granny and head for the stars in this awesome new inter-planetary life sim from Sierra.

92 Beneath A Steel Sky

IT'S GOT HUMOUR, wit and a character named Forster. What will those funsters at Sierra think of next?



93 Liti Divi

BATTLE YOUR WAY through fantasy land, mashing monsters as you go in this fun-packed arcade adventure from Gremlin.

94 Shadow Of The Comet

ANOTHER CLASSIC gets the CD-enhanced treatment and manages to retain its 'Highly Recommended' status.

BLUEPRINTS

28 Ka-50 Hokum

REACH FOR THE skies with Virgin's new chopper-tastic heli-sim that'll have you duckin' and a divin' about the sky as you attempt to shiver the timbers of a desperate band of gun-toting pirates in this super new shoot 'em/strategy sim.



32 Phantasmagoria

PREPARE TO BE amazed by Roberta Williams' spooksome new interactive movie that promises to scare the pants off anything this side of the Sierra mountains.

36 Klik & Play

THIS NEW, EASY to use game designer is set to revolutionise the gaming world as we know it. We sent Laurence Scotford to see what all of the fuss was about

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38 Central Intelligence

IF YOU FANCY yourself as a bit of a James Bond type, Ocean's new deep and seedy international espionage romp will have you itching to get into your tux. We sent Gareth Ramsey undercover to take a special look.

FEATURES

53 Viva Futbol!

JUST WHEN YOU thought there couldn't possibly be anymore, we review both *International Sensi* and *FIFA International Soccer*, and round up the recent crop of footie releases on the PC.

96 Games On The Dark Side

SOMETIMES THEY'RE downright rude, sometimes they're just plain nasty, and only a few carry any kind of warning. Laurence Scotford and Jeremy Wells take a look at the uncertain world of game censorship and outline the industries' future plans for game certification.



HARDWARE REVIEWS

110 Kelvin 64 Graphics Accelerator

THINKING OF buying a 32-bit graphics accelerator? Check out Orchid's new 64-bit wonder for complete satisfaction.

111 Thrustmaster Formula T1 Controls

FED UP WITH driving your mouse around your desk struggling to complete a lap playing *IndyCar*? Time to move on up to the complete driving upgrade from Thrustmaster.

112 UltraSound Max

WE POSITIVELY welcome the updated, elongated, user-friendly ninja card which promises to be capable of everything the Ultrasound wasn't. David McCandless waxes back his earflaps ready for a blast.

113 Sound Blaster 16 AWE 32

NOT TO BE outdone, Mark Burgess comes out fighting from the Sound Blaster corner and argues that size does matter when it comes to computers, especially when you're talking sound cards.

REGULARS

6 Bulletin

ALL THAT'S NEW from the Chicago Consumer Electronics Show.

20 Cover Disk

DON'T JUST GO and stick it in - read this first or you'll regret it forever.

120 Subscriptions

LET YOUR postie do the work and get *PC Zone* delivered to your door.

121 Mail Order

ROLL UP! Roll Up! Get your back issues and VFM software here!

108 Bits & PCs

HAVING PROBS with your upgrade? Heed the comforting words of Agony Uncle, Mark Burgess.

102 TroubleShooter

FLY THROUGH *Arena*: the *Elder Scrolls* with the help of The Trueplayers and hack your way in courtesy of The Hackmasters.

114 Off The Boards

YOU COULD be trawling the boards forever looking for that special piece of software. Just look in here instead.

118 WordProcessor

GET IT off your chest and into our regular moans and groans column - you'll feel much better for it.

122 Mr Cursor

WHATT A GEEZER! If he were a shoe, he'd be a Dunlop plimsol.

PC 100% GAMES ZONE

September 1994 Issue Eighteen

FREE!

Tie Fighter Keyboard Template

DON'T GET left behind in the hanger - blast those dastardly Rebels.

COVER DISK

HD Disk Version

Project X

THIS MONTH we've got the latest in arcade action. *Project X*, a superb shoot 'em up from Team 17. There's also a copy of the hottest new release in shareware: *Tubular Worlds*. Just type ZONE at the "A" prompt to find out more.

CD-ROM Version

ON THE CD this month, we have a superb compilation of programs from Epic Mega Games. You'll find games covering the whole spectrum; RPG, strategy, arcade, platform you name it, then it's probably there.

In addition we've got a rolling demo from *Outpost*, the latest release from Sierra; editors for *UFO*, *Doom*, *Corridor*, *Grand Prix* and lots more.

There's *Project X* from Team 17; *Megarace*, which is the latest in virtual racing from Mindscape, and all the shareware that's reviewed in *Off the Boards*.

And we've also got a surprise for all the *Doom* addicts - version 1.4. It's new and improved, and has a whole new set up for Death match. Miss this at your peril.



Bulletin

+ Unlike the majority of Englishmen to be found in the US a few weeks ago, **Jeremy Wells** was busy sorting out what's hot and happenin' at Chicago CES '94 instead of running around a field in an Ireland shirt. Find out if he made the right choice by reading our special nine page report of what's going down across the pond.

A Cool Breeze From The Windy City



This year's "big thing" was undoubtedly multimedia, with a sizeable section of the arena designated wholly to the CD-ROM experience, which basically meant that it was pretty much console-free. The rest of the show was a jam-packed jamboree of stands of all shapes and sizes jostling for space and attention.



THIS YEAR'S Summer CES (the fiftieth) was showcased as the biggest yet (again) and certainly lived up to the hype in terms of square feet and celebration. Nearly 40,000 people took their lives in their hands and passed through the revolving doors of the McCormick Centre in downtown Chicago, to explore over 300,000 square feet of the latest and greatest in electronic entertainment.

If this year's "big thing" in hardware was multimedia, it was undoubtedly the year of the interactive movie on the software front, with just about every major games publisher pushing at least one title in this genre. As a result, there was plenty of Hollywood hype flying around, with special guest appearances from "Hollywood

Superstars" such as Hulk Hogan and the more elusive Dennis Hopper, who was due to promote Gametek's new interactive horror flick, *Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller*. Virgin's massive "Hollywood style" launch of Disney's *The Lion King* (reputed to have cost around \$750,000!), heralded a new phase in corporate power marketing that is set to blast the consumer from every interface. You have been warned!

Sierra definitely on line

Q One of the most innovative and original of the interactive movies currently in development is, undoubtedly, Sierra's *Phantasmagoria*. Written and conceived by Roberta Williams (of *King's Quest* fame), it uses real-time video footage mapped onto Super VGA backgrounds, and draws on the talents of 18 professional actors and Hollywood director, Peter Maris. The plot revolves around a young married couple who have just moved into a rather spooksome looking Victorian house, once owned by a mysterious magician. Before you can say

"Hammer House of Horror", the couple quarrel and things degenerate from bad to worse as the heroine, Adrienne, is swept up into a tale of mystery and terror.

The game relies on some pretty gruesome special effects, most of which are seen in flashback and, all of which I am assured are integral to the plot. Filming is almost finished and the programming team is currently putting the finishing touches to the game, which is due for release well in time for Christmas. Of all the interactive movie games currently in production, *Phantasmagoria* definitely looks to be one of the slickest, promising a



Phantasmagoria: enter the house of axe murderers at your peril.

massive game environment and simply oodles of gameplay.

Other projects currently in development from Sierra include a new look "Disney-esque" *King's Quest VII*, boasting a whole new gallery of characters and a massive gaming arena. With stunning scrolling backgrounds and beautifully animated characters, this will be the biggest *King's Quest* yet, all crammed onto two CDs and due for release in the UK sometime in November.

Roger Wilco, the world's favourite janitor and hero of the *Space Quest* series of sci-fi/comic adventures, is also about to make a welcome return in *Space Quest 6*. Game designer, Josh Madell, is keeping things pretty wrapped up at the moment, although he did reveal that the new game features hi-res graphics, a scrolling message buffer (à la *Leisure Suit Larry*) and no icon bar, thus enabling the player to completely immerse his/herself in the huge games arena, which incidentally includes far off cyberpunk planets, massive spacecraft and even involves whizzing around the inside of the heroine's body in an attempt to save her. The game also features a complete cast of new characters (including amongst others a Hologram called Manuelle Override) and is jam-packed with some classic and rather obscure sci-fi references that true fans of the genre will love. *Space Quest 6* is due for release later this year on CD-ROM - a low res VGA version will be available on floppy at a later date. Contact Sierra on 0734 303322.



(Above) *King's Quest VII*: living in cardboard city does this to people.



(Below) *King's Quest VII*: Oooh, what a big tail you have, Mr Scorpion.

(Below) Roger Rabbit stars in *King's Quest VII*.



Maxis makes it bigger

Nestled away in a corner of the Multimedia Pavilion, Maxis was showing off a new line of products including two *SimCity 2000* add-on packs. The first, *Cities Of The World* includes, you've guessed it, 10 famous cities which you can manipulate and generally cause havoc in, whilst the second add-on, *SC2000: Urban Renewal Kit*, enables you to design your own buildings and graphics, and place them anywhere in your existing cities for that truly personalised look.

As if this wasn't enough, the soon to be available *SimTower* takes the whole scenario a stage further and lets you design your own office blocks and towering skyscrapers. As owner and landlord of a building, your objective is to construct and develop a balanced and profitable piece of commercial real estate by leasing out space inside your tower for apartments, offices, restaurants, shops and entertainment centres. Starting with



a limited budget and resources, you must watch the inhabitants of your building to see how you can improve their environment and thereby attract new investment, which will enable you to expand your building further. As if this doesn't sound difficult enough, there are also a range of disasters including terrorist threats, roach infestations and even a giant gorilla to deal with. Plans are afoot to eventually incorporate *SimTower* into *SimCity 2000* to give you the ultimate in management simulation, though in the meantime, *SimTower* alone should keep even the most discerning designer happy.

On a different line, *Klick & Play*, a revolutionary new game designer that runs through Windows, allows the user to create arcade, strategy and puzzle games without the need for any programming knowledge. With over 1,000 different sprites and hundreds of sound effects and animations, *Klick & Play* was one of the most innovative pieces of software on display. It's set to open up a hitherto neglected area: that of user-friendly game design on the PC. No doubt, it will spawn a host of similar utilities from other manufacturers keen to get in on this excellent new concept. Check out our *Klick & Play* Blueprint on page 36. Contact Maxis on 071 490 2333.

DISPATCHES

+++ Stand by your console

The prize for the most grossly overdone display must go to Nintendo, who had insisted on decking out one whole corner of the arena with trees and vines in an attempt to promote its all new *Donkey Kong Country* game. Its new 64-bit machine, the Ultra 64, was said to be "on schedule and on budget", whilst reports filtering back from a rather exclusive off-site preview, claimed two games demonstrated were wickedly fast and impressive.

+++ Cyberdreams Interactive goes all dark and moody

Winner of the "longest title for a game currently in production" award must go to Cyberdreams' new fantasy/horror adventure: *I Have No Mouth, And I Must Scream*. Based on the short story by Harlan Ellison, the player lives through the experiences of five different characters to defeat an all-powerful super computer that has destroyed humanity. The game, which will feature Super VGA graphics and a fully interactive player interface, will be available in the coming year. Contact Cyberdreams Interactive on 071 328 3267.

+++ Jaguar in overdrive

Atari was showcasing its Jaguar 64-bit console system and unveiled its new plug-in CD drive to be manufactured by Philips, although there seemed to be a plentiful lack of jaw-dropping playable games on display. The Atari PR team did its best to convince every single visitor to the company's rather modest stand that "a number of games are currently in development", but by the end of the show, the line was obviously wearing a bit thin, as was the gritted smile from which it was delivered. However, with unit sales expected to hit 300,000 in the US by the end of the year and a respectable stable of licensees on board, Atari has stopped blocking and has finally started to throw some punches of its own in the run up to the Christmas knock-out free for all.

+++ 300 games a-go-go

The 3DO Company didn't seem to be suffering too much by being in the "other" hall, despite no real back-up from Panasonic, and showcased 25 new titles at the show, taking the current total to a more respectable 60. Although the platform has been a success in Japan, it has yet to make a significant impact in the US and in

Bulletin

Inferno blazes onto the PC

The long awaited space flight sim shoot 'em up from Ocean, *Inferno*, is finally due for release this month and it certainly looks as though it's been worth the wait. As mankind's greatest pilot, you must defend humankind from total annihilation by the Rexxon empire. The entire solar system is your battleground, and you must plan and co-ordinate your attacks against 100 individually controlled enemy craft on seven different planets and three moons, each with their own particular climate zones and gravity.

Equipped with the latest futuristic weaponry, you must do battle with the enemy in space, inside vast enemy mother ships, skimming over enemy planets and deep within Rexxon installations. With over 700 missions to complete and a gob-smacking range of environments and enemies, *Inferno* looks set to carry on where other space adventures left off, with superb texture-mapped backgrounds and fluid arcade graphics, an interactive digital soundtrack from Gothic rockers, ASS, and even a novel-length comic-book by artist Sean Phillips to help set the scene. Contact Ocean on 061 832 6633.



Arise Sir-Tech

Most RPG fans will have heard of the massive *Wizardry* series of adventure games that began life on the Apple back in the early '80s and drew heavily on the *Dungeons & Dragons* role-playing format. Well you can now buy the last three, *Heart Of The Maelstrom*, *Bane Of The Cosmic Forge* and *Crusaders Of The Dark Savant*, all on one special CD. The games, which may appear a bit dated to the seasoned RPGer, feature strong storylines, full-screen animated graphics and digitised sound. The compilation, entitled *Wizard Trilogy 2* is expected to retail for around £50, and represents good value for fans of the genre.

As well as bundling together its classic *Wizardry* series, Sir-Tech has two new titles that will be available from the autumn. The first, *Star Trail*, is again a fantasy RPG set in the world of Arkania, in which you explore and battle with orcs, elves and dwarves in your attempt to retrieve the Star Trail blade. The game features fully-animated, phased time, isometric 3D combat, a sophisticated player controllable interface, digitised speech and over 50 animated monsters. There is also a "difficulty switch", which can be accessed at any time if things start to get hairy.

Jagged Alliance is labelled a "Strategy Role-Playing Simulation" and is set on a remote island in the South Atlantic, which is now used as a scientific research centre. Your job is to put together a crack unit of missionaries to defend the island from greedy rivals who want to seize the island and plunder its resources. It might sound as a change of direction for Sir-Tech, who up until now has remained firmly lodged in fantasy world, but it is, in essence, an RPG brought up to date with a modern scenario. *Jagged Alliance* again features digitised speech, 60 different mercenaries to choose from and a full-screen play arena with more than 50 different playing environments. In other words, nothing really new, but then at least Sir-Tech has continued to produce what it's best at and you know what to expect. Contact Sir-Tech on (USA) 315 393 6451.



US Gold Spot

US Gold was riding high after enjoying a (Mexican?) wave of success with its *World Cup '94* football game and was showing off a new golf sim to be launched to tie in with the Davis Cup. By far the most intriguing game on show was a *Horde* come *Castles* strategy, genetic mix 'n' match, beat 'em up called *Dominus*. As overlord of the dominion, you must do battle with the multitude of clans who are invading your kingdom and reaping your precious natural resources. Far from being a training sim for African heads of state, the game features hand-to-hand combat action, various design-your-own spells and traps, a vast playing arena and seven levels of difficulty. What really sets this game apart from other battle sims on the market, however, is the option to create your own monsters by mixing them together using a special cloning feature. Consequently, you can develop different monsters with different traits to do specific jobs, by blending them with other monsters and thereby creating crack units or super monsters. You can then assign your "super monsters" to various missions or roles in order to deploy your resources most efficiently. For example, a monster you have developed to fight specifically in built-up areas with strong but close range firepower can be designated to defend your castle from attack, whilst a speedy fiend you've developed can be used to carry out "seek and destroy" missions. You can go a stage further and mix the two to develop the ultimate universal soldier, although as the game is played in real time, this would take you absolutely ages.

Such features not only make *Dominus* a lot of fun to play, but as the game actually evolves with the player, it offers an almost limitless degree of gameplay as you desperately race about creating the most efficient and deadly force, designing the most cunning of traps whilst continually developing your very own battle plan for world domination. *Dominus* will be available on CD-ROM in the autumn. Contact US Gold on 021 625 3388.



DISPATCHES

Europe, although this could all change with a new marketing drive and the pledged support of Japanese heavyweights Konami, Taito, Capcom and Jaleco amongst others.

+++ Sega takes it easy

Sega's presence was surprisingly low key for the first time in years, with only a small exhibition area located beneath the main hall. The company's games were everywhere, however, a clear indication that its Genesis (Mega Drive) unit, which Sega claims is now installed in over 13 million homes across the USA, has finally beaten Nintendo into temporary submission. With a seemingly endless stream of new titles, as well as its new Genesis 32X (Mega Drive 32) system (which plugs into the existing 16-bit console) ready for launch in the autumn, 25 licensees already backing the system, a price tag of £150 and a console version of *Doom* in the offing, it may have taken ages, but Sega is now riding high with a whopping 60 per cent share of the market so far this year Stateside.

+++ Philips CD-i card for PC

Philips had an impressive display in two halls: a dazzling wall of TVs on the main stand blasted home the message that the "new" Philips is a leading force to be reckoned with in the electronic entertainment industry. With the company's CD-i players now stocked by 15,000 retail outlets worldwide, it was literally brimming with confidence following announcements that Goldstar is planning to incorporate the format in some of its consumer electronics products.

Whilst the new \$299 games-orientated 450 CD-i and the current 210 system will be marketed with renewed force in Europe, there are also plans to launch a 32-bit CD-i PC card that will allow the burgeoning list of CD-i titles to be played on the PC, although no specific details or prices were announced.

Eager to capitalise on the news that *The Seventh Guest*: CD-i was number one in the games charts, Philips Media Distribution's president, John Hawkins, was keen to promote the joys of the "Point 'n' Click - Plug 'n' Play" CD-i platform as a massive appeal games machine. With the promise of a further 50 or so new titles in the coming months, including *Battle Chess* and *Lost Vikings*, Philips' vision of "Platform-free publishing" is beginning to look like less of a heady vision and more of a foreseeable concept.

HE'S BACK!...



ZOOL 2 is a very good sequel to an excellent game -

PC ZONE recommended.

I'm partial to a bit of platformering and ZOOL 2 is a classy example of the genre.

PC REVIEW

... And it's better than Cool Spot!

PC FORMAT

Zool fans are going to go for this, like Sega-heads went for Sonic 2. It's all here - smooth, fast and addictive platform action.

PC HOME

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Bulletin

Interplay hard to beat

By far the most impressive crop of new releases could be found on the massive Interplay stand, where a whole host of new and innovative games were on show. Top of the list must come *Cyberia*, a futuristic action adventure that combines state-of-the-art graphics and animation with stunning music and sound effects, created by Thomas Dolby's Headspace for the complete interactive experience.

Designed and developed by Xatrix Interactive Design, *Cyberia* is set in a future where global terrorists rule and mankind lives on the brink of destruction. The ultimate Domesday device has just been discovered beneath the frozen wastelands of Northern Asia. Codenamed *Cyberia*, it was designed in an era of long forgotten peace by the most brilliant minds in nano and cybernetic technology. Scary or what? Like most of the interactive adventures on show, the proof really is in the playing. However, if you

development, a new engine and general re-hab, it's back under the guise of *Dungeon Master II: The Legend Of Skullkeep*. Featuring greater player interactivity, hand-rendered VGA graphics and a real-time full weather environment, it promises to be much more than just a sequel. Detailed creature animations and an auto-mapping feature complete the impressive spec, which should be welcome to all fans of the original when it is released this autumn.

Remaining in RPG mode, Interplay is also set to release *Stonekeep*, an interactive movie adventure featuring full-screen 3D rendered graphics, digitised characters and a massive gaming environment. Years ago, when you were but a child, the immortal Shadowking cast your beloved city down into the bowels of the earth. Before you can say "Milton Keynes", you discover that the cunning goddess, Thera, has gone and taken your soul (presumably when you weren't looking) and now refuses to give it back until you free her

brothers and sisters, whose spirits are trapped somewhere in *Stonekeep*. Your quest takes you over perilous subterranean corridors and treacherous catacombs as you encounter mysterious, lost temples and wicked creatures whom you must outwit or destroy. With a mega motley crew of nasties to outwit and 13 different environments to explore, *Stonekeep* is destined to deliver lasting playability and true interaction, wrapped up in a visual feast of real-time animation.

Kingdom: The Far Reaches, due out on the PC in October, looks very *Dragon's Lair*-ish which to some might not be such a bad thing. Utilising the CD-ROM's

capabilities to the full, it contains more than 400 MB of animation and fully digitised speech, along with a simple "point and click" interface for easy control. The cartoon-style graphics look very pretty, although the gameplay itself might be too limited for seasoned RPGers.

Definitely worth a look if you were a fan of *Dragon's Lair* though.

On a more adult note, *Voyeur* is a new interactive political thriller where you must piece together several clips of video evidence in order to reveal the ringleader behind a presidential smear campaign, before you are

discovered and dealt with accordingly. The game incorporates over 60 minutes of full-motion video and randomly inter-locking scenarios in an attempt to give it greater depth, whilst the multi-pathed plot allows the player to control the sequence of events and outcomes. With the emphasis on "movie" and less on "interactive", *Voyeur* does not promise hours of gameplay, but it is pretty entertaining to look at nevertheless.

Trekky fans again have something to shout about thanks to a new release *Star Trek: Starfleet Academy*, which is due out early next year. All your favourite characters from the TV series are to be found in this Super VGA flight sim, which features the voices of *Trek* legends, Nimoy and Shatner, and contains dozens of simulated missions in the final

frontier. With a choice of three ships to command, from Constitutional-class heavy cruisers to science vessels, you must guide your crew on a variety of missions ranging from scientific research to diplomacy to full scale war, in an attempt to graduate to the top of the class. *Star Trek: Starfleet Academy* puts you on the bridge of *Starfleet's* finest, in the toughest simulations that the Federation can devise – a must for all fans of the classic sci-fi series. Contact Interplay on 0235 821666.



were to risk every housewife's mirth on this one occasion and judge a book by its cover, you'd be convinced that you were in for a damn good read.

It won't win any prizes for originality but *Descent*, a robotic *Doom*-esque shoot 'em up set in miles of treacherous tunnels through which you must guide your super-fast hovertank (shooting anything and everything that moves), was one of the slickest and most challenging games on display. The speed and fluidity of the animation would leave your average marine in a cool sweat, whilst the diversity of the levels and sheer manoeuvrability of your craft leaves other games of this ilk standing. Due for release later this year, *Descent* looks to be the most competent challenger to the *Doom* legacy yet.

Many seasoned RPGers will remember the *Dungeon Master* adventure game released way back in 1987, one of the first real-time 3D adventure games ever developed. Well, after four years of

DISPATCHES

+++ More for your MPEG

Sigma Designs has expanded its range of ReelMagic titles, after recently licensing its ReelMagic Application Programming Interface (API) to more than 150 software companies. Titles now include *Space Ace*, *Return To Zork*, *Conspiracy*, *Lord Of The Rings*, *Prince Interactive* and a video compilation of Aussie rockers, *INXS*. More titles are expected to be released before the end of the year. Contact Sigma Designs on 0462 456780.

+++ Zephyr takes off

If you mistakenly thought that *Zephyr* was a driving sim based on the old Ford classic, you wouldn't be too far off the mark. It is, in fact, a 3D shoot 'em up set in the 24th century where you must pilot your battle hungry hover tank (the *Zephyr*) through subway systems, under water, over alien landscapes, blasting away the opposition as you go.

The year is 2365 and corporate competition has been taken to new levels. Corporate takeovers and arbitration settlements are settled in the gladiatorial arenas of the Interplanetary Battle Circuit. Enter the *Zephyr* hover tank, the most sophisticated weapons system ever created. Featuring 3D rendered graphics, futuristic terrains and network play for multi-play battles, *Zephyr* is also compatible with leading VR headsets for total player immersion. Contact US Gold on 021 625 3388.

+++ Gametek gets nasty

Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller, starring Dennis Hopper, Grace Jones and super-model Stephanie Seymour, certainly wins the award for celebrity hype at SCES '94. A dark, futuristic thriller set in the year 2094, the Hand Of God Party controls Washington – and the gates of Hell have opened. It all looks rather dark and mysterious, and the chaps at Gametek are playing this one pretty close to their chests until a big launch later this year. Still, with such big names behind it and a compellingly original storyline, this looks to be one of the most interesting interactive movie releases this year.

Star Crusader, an interstellar flight sim, probably won't win any awards for originality, but looks to be one of the most playable space strategy sims this side of Orion. With stunning animated graphics and the option to play either side, 11 different ships to command

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Bulletin

Merit make some bold moves

There was always a massive crowd on the Merit stand, and most of the attention was firmly focused on the rolling demo of the much anticipated *Harvester*. Billed as "a graphically violent experience in

terror, combining role-playing action and arcade style combat with an intense, cinematic story line", *Harvester* is essentially a gory interactive adventure.

However, it bursts originality in the plot department: set in a small town in mid-west America, *Harvest* is

the kind of place where lawn sprinklers twirl idly behind tidy white picket fences and old men gather to play chess outside the barber shop. You've lived in Dullsville all your life and are about to marry your high school sweetheart, that is you were, until she suddenly disappeared leaving you to find a hideous bloody skull and spinal cord draped across her bed. Not being one to take a hint, you desperately attempt to discover what has happened and inexorably become involved with the mysterious "Order of the Harvest Moon" - who seem to be controlling the town in ways you don't or can't understand.

If you accused the folk at Merit of using shock tactics, they'd probably agree and, on the face of it, *Harvester* does look to contain a certain amount of gratuitous gore and violence, but it also looks to be one of the most interesting releases on the PC this year. With stunning visuals and a suitably heart-thumping soundtrack, it's certainly not lacking in the "looks nice" department. What it plays like is anyone's guess, but you can guarantee that it will upset a few people when it's finally released later this year, although one suspects that's all part of the plan.

Psychotron, however, is a rather inoffensive interactive detective movie, where you play the part of a CIA type employed to locate a missing Psychotronic Generator recently sold to the US by cash-hungry Ruskies. It's much more down to earth and a good deal less exciting. Basically, you must interview various key characters, search different locations and make

certain key decisions, all of which will influence what video clip you see next. As the plot and your investigation progresses, the characters react in different ways to the decisions that you've made, leading you on to the next stage of the game.

Psychotron runs through Windows and features over an hour's worth of video footage. Again it's more "movie" and less "interactive", although the scoring feature that is incorporated into the game allows for a multi-player mode in which players can compete against each other. It looks good on screen, but many of the scenes are just so badly over-acted, you want to laugh at the characters rather than interview them. In this type of game your options are going to be limited to the amount of video footage there is, so the action will inevitably start to repeat itself after you've completed it once or twice, but then that's the downfall of all games of this genre.

If you've always fancied taking to the skies, but have been put off by the techy nature of many of the current flight sims on the market that either seem to require the limbs of an octopus or a week's training at RAF Mildenhall, *Fighter Wing* could be the answer. Armed with a state-of-the-art 3D engine with real-time terrain generation, numerous missions to complete, a local area network capability and original video footage, it oozes playability and doesn't take hours to get into. With the emphasis on "action",

you can choose from some of the world's most spectacular aircraft, and fly missions over the most dangerous hotspots. There are also three levels of play, including training missions for beginners, multiple player missions with up to two teams of eight players competing against each other, and complex missions for 1 to 3 players competing against the computer. The action is fast and furious to say the least, and definitely not advised for those who feel more at home behind a mass of keyboard commands and a 400-page manual.

If you prefer to keep your feet firmly on the ground, but still like a bit of action, *The Fortress Of Dr Radiaki* shouldn't come as a disappointment. Again, it's pretty much a *Doom* come *Wolfenstein* style jaunt set within the walls of a vast fortress.

You've been sent in to save the world from nuclear destruction, armed with just a baseball bat and a bad attitude. If you manage to swing your way through the hordes of sword-wielding Samurai, Ninja warriors and mutated alligators, you get to do battle with the evil Dr Radiaki himself. The game features nice animation and a variety of different weapons and levels, as well as "intelligent" monsters who actually respond in different ways to your attacks. It's nothing really new, but a lot of fun all the same.

Contact Merit on 091 385 7755.



Papyrus on the right track

Nascar Racing, the new release from Papyrus, includes the same real-time 3D graphics as the award-winning *IndyCar* and is based on the NASCAR Winston Cup Series.

Featuring SVGA hi-res graphics, nine realistically rendered NASCAR tracks with banking corners, sponsored billboards and infield grass, the simulation includes a Newtonian physics capability that models the performance of the cars, giving a uniquely realistic "feel" to the car's handling. The game also includes realistic stock car crashes with car damage, loose parts, smoke and flames as well as a new Car Paint Kit that allows the player to customise the texture-mapped car graphics, change decals and colours to fully customise each vehicle. In addition, players can experiment with rear spoiler angles, tyre pressure, suspension stiffness and gear ratios to get the maximum performance from their cars for the ultimate driving challenge.

Contact Virgin on 081 960 2255.



Bethesda starts to slam dunk

There is yet to be a decent basketball game released on any format that can match the pace and excitement of the real thing. With this in mind, the team at Bethesda is about to release *NCAA Road To The Final Four* which utilises full 360 degrees 3D flight simulator graphics technology to put you right at the centre of the action. The game also features digitised players, thumping sound effects and a constantly changing view that ensures a clear and unimpeded look at every

shot, steel and rebound - all controlled by a simple user interface. Players can either opt to play the whole tournament, the Final Four or the National Championship, whilst the player editor allows you to modify any player's name, attributes or statistics for complete control.

Also due for release a little later in the spring is *The Elder Scrolls: Daggerfall*, the second chapter in the highly acclaimed *The Elder Scrolls* series. New features include a fully contoured landscape, fully interactive characters, an advanced version of



"Spellmaker" and a new menagerie of monsters and enemies. Another key feature is the ability to "import" your original *TES: Arena* character into the new game to achieve complete continuity. *Daggerfall* also allows the player to own land, property and ships, as well as participate in the local politics of guilds, trade goods and services for complete interaction.

The game features a whole new set of quests to be completed and promises hours of gameplay. However, this top spec comes at a price since you will need at least a 486-33 with CD-ROM drive and 8 MB RAM to get the game to perform as intended. Contact Bethesda on 021 625 3388.

DISPATCHES

and over 100 missions, it's set to be one of the most complex and sophisticated sims due for release. Contact Gametek on 0743 553445.

+++ **Spectrum HoloByte** once more treks boldly forward
Trekky fans will not be disappointed with Spectrum HoloByte's recent crop of *Star Trek* releases, which it is now converting to other platforms. The latest, *Star Trek: The Next Generation "A Final Unity"*, features the voices of eight of the actors from the TV series, and players can choose to play any one of the seven main characters, as they embark on missions for the Federation and find themselves caught up in an unfolding mystery with the crew of the *Starship Enterprise*.

Just when you thought you were safe from the *Tetris* hybrids that have crept into the market, Spectrum HoloByte has released *Breakthru*, a *Tetris* type blocks and bricks puzzle game, that will run through Windows and will no doubt have you taking three hour lunch breaks, as you attempt to massacre your colleagues' best score.

+++ **SSI** on a new campaign
Of the many new releases lined up from SSI, *Alien Logic*, a new wave fantasy RPG set in the *Sky Realms Of Jorune* and due for release this month, screams originality. With seven different individual species, each with goals and wills of their own with which to interact, the player must explore the Super VGA world of mystery and ancient alien intrigue in this vast playing arena. What really sets *Alien Logic* apart, however, is that unlike many RPGs, it relies more on the player's diplomacy and ability to interact with other characters in a land where violence is never your only option.

Fans of the AD&D adventure games will not be disappointed with two new releases due out before the end of the year, *Dark Sun: Wake Of The Ravager* and *Menzoberranzan*. Both feature in-depth storylines and massive player environments, with beautifully rendered cinematic graphics and scrolling using an enhanced version of the *Ravenloft* engine to get you deep into the action.

Panzer General, due for release in October, combines the best in strategy war-gaming with authentic World War II film footage for added realism. With over 35 progressive scenarios and 350 unit types, from Tiger tanks to B-17 Flying Fortresses to command, as well as a two player option, it

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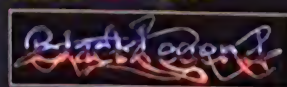
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Bulletin

LucasArts strikes back

Possibly the biggest breeze at the show was tucked away in a small booth, protected by a guy dressed in leather, lounging over a Harley. Far from being a secret entrance into the Blue Oyster Bar, it was in fact the gateway into the world that is LucasArts.

Inside the rather low key affair could be found the latest installment in the Star Wars saga, *Dark Forces*. The game engine might look familiar, but that's where the similarity ends.

The New Order of the Imperial Empire has been surging through the galaxy with devastating results. The Rebel Alliance has gained information about a new Imperial battle station called the Death Star. Unable to acquire information on this space station through its regular forces, it

graphics, 3D texture-mapped, gouraud shaded objects as well as digitised speech and stereo soundtrack.

Dark Forces is definitely the most appealing of the soon to be released stroll 'n' shoot 'em ups, blending the mega successful *Star Wars* scenario into one of the most visually interactive formats currently in vogue. Miss it and Chewy will never forgive you.

And now back to the Harley. The reason why the entrance to LucasArts was partially blocked by this classic cruiser was to promote the new, futuristic graphic adventure, *Full Throttle*: a cinematic, 3D animated adventure. You play Ben, a hardcore biker and gang leader, who has been framed for murder. Separated from his gang and a fugitive from the law, he must clear his name and rescue a kidnapped heiress.



Featuring full screen graphics, digitised sound and cinematic chase sequences, *Full Throttle* is a fast paced adventure extravaganza like no other.

Looking further ahead, LucasArts has teamed up with special effects wizards Industrial Light & Magic to produce *The Dig*, a cinematic sci-fi adventure that utilises a unique "flashlight effect" in which the beam of a flashlight moves through a narrow, underground tunnel. The plot centres around a small team of space explorers who set out to blast an asteroid out of the Earth's orbit, only to be swept away by an alien booby trap to a distant world. They're not giving too much away at the moment, but with the combined talents of Spielberg and LucasArts behind it, *The Dig* certainly looks like creating a storm when it is released early next year. Contact LucasArts on 081 960 2255.

MicroProse makes some magic

As well as showcasing numerous scenario upgrades and CD-ROM versions, including *Fleet Defender*, 1944: *Across The Rhine* and 1942: *The Pacific Air War*, MicroProse was busy showing off its new strategy game, *Colonization*, currently under development and due for release later this year. Inspired by the huge hit *Civilization* (also now available for Windows), players control either

English, Dutch, French or Spanish colonists in *The New World* which can either be the accurately mapped North or South America, or a randomly generated world with various resources and challenges. Players must oversee the economic, political and military growth of a colony, and then strive to achieve independence from the mother country. Once this is established, they can then attempt to foster colonies of their own and compete with other

nations in the scramble for pastures new. With a detailed internal structure and a massive range of features, *Colonization* takes the player on into the next great historical power struggle. Still in sequel mode,

Master Of Magic is a new strategy, fantasy adventure romp in the same flavour of *Master Of Orion*. The game attempts to merge elements not usually found in

just one game, including exploration, spellcasting, combat and strategy into a complex fantasy framework. It features five difficulty settings, a simple to use "point and click" icon-based interface and a number of different races, monsters, heroes and treasures to keep even the most discerning adventurer/strategist/wizard/warrior happy.

Contact MicroProse on 0454 326532.



employs the skills of a covert agent, an elite member of the Rebel Command. You must navigate your way through the corridors and catwalks of the enemy's starships, descending deep into the Imperial Base, freeing Rebel prisoners as you go, and finally squaring off in a battle against Admiral Mohc and his army of special darktroopers.

Dark Forces utilises a sophisticated player platform that can rotate through 360 degrees, look up and down, as well as execute special movements such as jumping and ducking. There's also a Personal Digital Assistant for easy access to mission briefings, as well as a Heads-Up display for status evaluation and an auto-mapping function for quick location reference. The game also features more than a dozen different environments to explore, all rendered in highly detailed

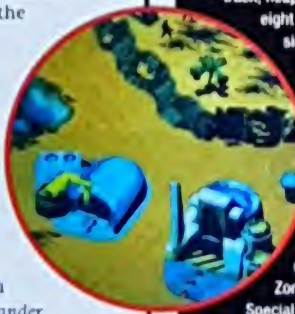


BULLETIN

Virgin all conquering

Virgin was showing off its spritely *Flight Unlimited* from the company's newly formed Looking Glass Technologies, as well as a number of new products on PC CD-ROM due for release in the autumn, including *Kyrandia 3: Malcolm's Revenge*, *Lost Eden* (from the creators of *Dune*) and *Creature Shock*: an exploratory shoot 'em up incorporating both first person walking levels and flight simulation sequences interspersed with third-person cinematic cut-aways. Set in 2023, the Earth is on the brink of World War III and you must pilot the ss Ama-zon, a survey ship, deep into space in an effort to find a new planet to inhabit. Featuring 3D graphics and high speed video compression developed by UK company, Argonaut, it certainly sounds quite spectacular, with three massive levels of play to keep the player busy for aeons.

Also on show was *Command And Conquer*, another *Dune* type strategy sim, and the ground shaking *Mech Commander* that puts the player in control of a towering 100 ton metal menace. Featuring a selection of three robots, a vast array of weapons and terrains ranging from mountain ranges to Arctic wastelands and windswept deserts, players must work their way through the ranks by completing various missions, enabling them to purchase improved arsenals and move into more strategically focused missions. With a huge playing arena and the option to play head to head against another player through a modem link, *Mech Commander* definitely looks set to challenge all other games of this type when it's released in the autumn. Contact Virgin on 081 960 2255.



DISPATCHES

promises to be one of the most comprehensive battle sims to be released this year.

Nothing new, but looking pretty fiesty, was *CyCrones*, yet another *Doom*-esque 3D, stroll 'n' shoot type affair, featuring digitised speech, eight massive missions to complete and also *Renegade*, a shoot 'em up, space combat simulator that puts the player in charge of a squadron of 25 wingmen. Both will be available in the autumn. Contact SSI on 0753 549442.

+++ New media gets scary

New Media has come up with an unusual new CD-ROM product that might just keep the kids quiet. Based on the TV show, *Are You Afraid Of The Dark?* (available over here on Nickelodeon) features a group of kids known as "The Midnight Society" who trade tales of mystery in an attempt to scare the pants off each other. The game falls firmly under the Edutainment banner, and is designed to encourage children to develop their storytelling and imagination through exploring the numerous rooms and alleyways as the story unfolds. It's heaped with atmosphere and uses sophisticated special effects and digitally enhanced props, period costumes and the environs of an authentic vaudeville house. Due for release next month, prepare yourselves for more where this came from. Contact Viacom on 0444 24633.

+++ 21st Century flips a winner

Hot on the success of *Pinball Fantasies* and *Pinball Dreams* comes *Pinball Dreams Deluxe*: CD-ROM. Featuring eight of the greatest 21st Century pinball tables, including four brand new ones specially developed for *Pinball Dreams Deluxe*, a CD quality soundtrack, heaps of jingles and an eight player option, it's simply the best in table top entertainment. Contact 21st Century on 0235 851852.

+++ Win a

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UK launch for VFX1 VR systems

For what seems like years now, we have been told that VR technology will soon be in the home and that it will change the games industry forever. Well, it seems like there is at last some truth behind these claims as Forte Technologies finally prepares to launch its VFX1 unit into Europe, and it looks like the UK will be the first country to stock them.



The VFX1 unit is expected to sell for under \$1,000 in the US and is gaining increasing support from leading software developers including Origin, Interplay, Electronic Arts and Psygnosis. The unit, which comes complete with a "CyberPuck" input device (a sort of programmable tilt and turn joystick which the player uses to move around), was up and running with *Doom*, *Zephyr* from New World Computing and the amazing new space flight sim from Ocean, *Inferno*. The VFX1 consists of two 6.7 inch colour displays that provide the equivalent of watching a 35 foot screen, stereo headphones and a vcs head tracker. The tracker provides roll, pitch and yaw co-ordinates, all built into a kind of cut-away helmet design that covers the head to evenly distribute the weight of the unit. The system demonstrated at the show was comfortable to wear and didn't feel in any way claustrophobic, although it would obviously take

some getting used to if worn for prolonged periods.

Other systems on the market included the Astounding 2001 VR Video Visor and the Cybermaxx from VictorMaxx. Unlike the VFX1, both units can also be used with VCRs and are expected to be released onto the US market at the end of the year. Both units differ from the VFX1 in that they follow a more minimal design to help reduce weight, and some people may find having to wear the unit strapped to their head a little uncomfortable.

The Astounding 2001 VR unit, which is expected to retail at a few hundred dollars less than its current rivals, does not come with a head tracker and, therefore, would not give the sensation of total virtual immersion when used in conjunction with your PC. However, a head tracker unit will be available as an optional extra, though at a cost, which in effect puts all three units in a similar price bracket.

As yet there are no concrete dates for when any of this hardware will be released in the UK, but you can expect to see VR units on the shelves early next year.



A girl can't go anywhere these days without her snazzy VR helmet.

A pain in the back

If you're looking for that total "almost there - so real you can feel it" experience, the Interactor vest from Aura is definitely for you. The system, which basically consists of a power amp and speaker system that the player straps to his back, plugs directly into any audio output and



converts the base sound waves into body-pulsing vibrations for that vital "just poked in the kidneys" feeling.

The unit can be fine tuned and has its own set of sensitivity controls, so you can customise vest performance to a particular game and filter out certain sounds, allowing you to adjust the intensity to your liking.

It's obviously not for everyone and will not suit every type of game. However, after using it with various shoot 'em/beat 'em ups such as *Doom*, racing games and platform games, you really miss it when you take it off and start playing without it. It works best if you've also got a pretty meaty sound system hooked up to your PC - and would be great if you were plugged into a VR headset. Priced at around \$60-70 in the US, you can expect to see it over here for much the same pretty soon. Contact Aura on (US) 310 643 5300.

Boom Boom

Newly named Interact has just brought out a new line of peripherals, including speakers, joysticks and game pads for the PC.



Top of the pile are the Aerospace speakers which feature an internal amplifier, bass booster and a magnetically shielded design. The speakers, which can be attached to your PC monitor and run off 8 AA batteries or a 9 V DC adaptor, can also be used with your Walkman. Contact Interact on (US) 410 785 5661.

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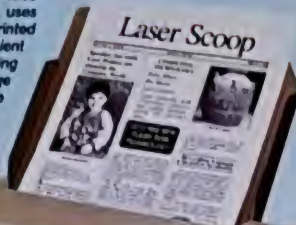
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Standard RAM	2mb	1mb	1mb	1mb	0.5mb
Full A4 page graphics @ 300dpi with standard RAM	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
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Layout document description language included	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Flash ROM	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Flash ROM upgradeable firmware	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
PCMCIA card slot	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Scalable resident fonts - in HP (LJ) emulation	8	13	28	8	-
Resident bit-mapped fonts	14	18	-	7	7
AGI 4 intelligent scalable font technology	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
HP LaserJet III emulation included	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
EPSON FX emulation included	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
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Standard tray capacity	100	150	100	100	150
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Able to print on OHP film	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
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Bulletin

NovaLogic ready for a punch-up

Just when you thought your new 486 was up to the job, the masters of the battle sim are back with *Armoured Fist*, a spectacular battle tank sim that plunges you into the heart of the modern battlefield in the command of a company of armoured units.

Featuring unique state-of-the-art graphics generated by NovaLogic's unique Voxel Space graphics engine, *Armoured Fist* brings you closer to the action through its use of revolutionary in-tank imaging and advanced strategic displays. Take control of American units and drive the US built M1A2 Abrams or M3 Bradley IFV, or switch sides and sit behind the controls of the Soviet T-80 or BMP. As commander, the player can either choose to sit back and dictate the strategy for up to four platoons from the relative safety of the Command & Control Vehicle, or get right into the firing line and control their own tank. Battlefield effects promise to be second to none and even include translucent smoke, explosions, night vision optics and a sophisticated in-tank imaging facility.

Detailed combat missions will allow for in-depth strategy and hours of gameplay, while the built-in construction set enables the player to create diverse battle scenarios to match his skill. Numerous on-board options allow the user to track the enemy, plan ambushes and even call in remote artillery or air support when things don't go exactly to plan.

With full multi-channel sound and digitised speech, *Armoured Fist* looks to be the most realistic and up-to-date battle tank sim yet. It all comes at a price, however, and though it will run on a 386 sx, NovaLogic recommends a speedy 486 or Pentium with 8MB of RAM to get the most out of it. *Armoured Fist* is due for release in September on CD-ROM and floppy. Contact NovaLogic on 0462 456 780.



Hassle-free CD

Borsonline has released a double-speed CD-ROM drive that is not only exceptionally cheap (£99.95, excluding VAT), but also happens to be the easiest CD drive to fit. Why? Because it is an IDE drive, so it has been designed to work alongside your other disk drives. All you need do is slot it into a free drive bay, plug in the power and data cables that are already inside your machine and you're ready to enjoy top CD games. If you want to find out just how good this new bit of hardware bit is, then stay tuned as we'll be carrying a full review in next month's issue. Contact Borsonline on 0441 477007.

GALLUP CHARTS

So many games, so little time – these days, shopping for your PC can be a nightmare. But now, with the help of Gallup's handy household charts, you can check out what you should be playing. There's something for everyone here: full-price PC titles, budget games and even a selection of CD-ROM titles.

Top 20 Full Price Titles

1. Theme Park	Electronic Arts
2. SimCity 2000	Maxis/Mindscape
3. X-Wing	US Gold
4. The Settlers	Blue Byte
5. Striker	Rage Software
6. Cannon Fodder	Virgin
7. 1942 Pacific Airways	MicroProse
8. Premier Manager 2	Gremlin Graphics
9. TFX	Ocean
10. IndyCar Racing	Virgin
11. Sensible Soccer '92/'93	Renegade/Mindscape
12. Network Q RAC Rally	Europress Software
13. Kick Off 3	Anco
14. Alone In The Dark 2	Infogrames
15. Microsoft Flight Simulator V.5	Microsoft
16. International Sensible Soccer	Renegade/Mindscape
17. Ryder Cup Golf	Ocean
18. Lemmings 2	Psygnosis
19. Universal Clip Art: Batman/NFL	Gametek
20. World Cup USA '94	US Gold

Top 10 PC Budget Titles

1. Theme Park Demo Disk	Electronic Arts
2. Archie Maclean's Pool	Hit Squad
3. Doom (TS)	Titanium Seal
4. Sim City Classic	Hit Squad
5. The Secret Of Monkey Island	Klxx
6. Doom (MS)	Micro Star
7. Dune	Hit Squad
8. Easy To Learn Computing	Premier Collection
9. Streetfighter 2	Klxx
10. Battle Of Britain	Klxx

Top 10 CD-ROM Titles

1. Theme Park	Electronic Arts
2. 7th Guest/Dune	Telestar Fun & Games
3. Day Of The Tentacle	US Gold
4. Rebel Assault	US Gold
5. UFO: Enemy Unknown	MicroProse
6. Encarta	Microsoft
7. Cyber Race	Cyberdreams
8. TFX	Ocean
9. Animals	Action 16
10. Sam & Max – Hit The Road	US Gold

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Music Technology Magazine, March 1994.

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PC Home, July 1994.

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Multimedia & CD-ROM Now (9/10), July 1994.

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COVER DISK

September

After last month's Lucas Arts CD, we are continuing the trend with a CD compilation of programs from Epic Mega Games. There's the latest offering from ID software, *Doom v 1.4* which has got all sorts of new extras; editors for *UFO* and *Grand Prix*, and all the shareware that's been reviewed in this month's *Off The Boards*. If that's not enough for you, there's also a fully interactive demo of the CD version of *Megarace* from Mindscape and a rolling preview of *Outpost* from Sierra. And finally, a *PC Zone* exclusive on both the CD and HD disk, *Project X*, an arcade shoot 'em up from Team 17.



PROJECT X

This is the latest game from Team 17 and is a good, old-fashioned shoot 'em up. This level, which is exclusive to *PC Zone*, is the first stage of the full game. Good luck!

To play *Project X*, you should follow the instructions below.

HD Disk users.

Make the drive containing the disk current. e.g. Type: **A:**

Then type: **X**
and off you go.

CD Users

Make the drive containing the disk current. e.g. Type: **D:**

Then go into the Team 17 directory by typing the following:

CD \TEAM 17

Then type: **X**

If you are using a Sound Blaster then type: **X S**

Gravis users should type: **X G**

NB These will work with brand names only and not compatibles.

Project X is keyboard controlled only, and the keys are as follows:

Space = Fire. This fires the activated weapon.

Tab = Select weapon. This will activate the chosen weapon shown on the bottom of the screen. The more power ups you collect, the more vicious your weapon.

P = Pause
Cursor Keys = Movement controls
M = Bar control. This shows/hides the status and score bars.

MEGARACE

This is a newbie from Mindscape and, at the time of going to press, was No. 3 in the game charts. *Megarace* is a classic racing game with amazing graphics, and an entertaining intro. This demo is fully interactive, and shows just what can be done with a multimedia set up.

Go to the dos prompt that contains your CD-ROM. For example:

Type: **D:**

Then go into the Mindscape directory by typing: **CD \MINDSCAPE**

Then go into the *Megarace* sub-directory by typing: **CD \MEGARACE**

Then type: **INSTALL**

and follow the instructions on screen which will allow you to define the location of the installation directory etc. You can also configure the keys, which makes life a bit simpler. You should note though that *Megarace* has to be played via the CD-ROM.

PC ZONE CD GOES NATIONAL

● Well, it seems that you've taken to our new CD edition. The first two issues of *PC Zone* that have carried a cover-mounted CD have been flying off the shelves of WH Smiths and John Menzies.

● So, from the October issue onwards the CD edition of *PC Zone* will be distributed nationally. That means you should find it on the shelves of your local newsagent as well as in the big chain stores.

● That's especially good news because we've some unique and exciting plans for forthcoming CD editions that we're sure you're going to like. Better reserve your copy now!



THE EPIC COLLECTION

This month we have compiled the best programs from the shareware kings, Epic Mega Games. Not only have we got this compilation for you, but we also have an exclusive offer available to readers of *PC Zone* which will save you £5 with every program you register! You lucky sods.

Epic Pinball & Solar Winds

Epic Pinball is a pinball game (funny that). It's fully playable and simple to operate. The important keys are:

- Left cursor key** = Flip left
- Right cursor key** = Flip right
- Space** = Nudge table

Solar Winds is that rare breed that is both an arcade and adventure game. The controls are mouse-driven, and there are so many that it would take a whole page to explain them.

To install either *Epic Pinball* or *Solar Winds*, make the drive that contains the CD-ROM current by typing, for example: **D:**

Then go into the *Epic* directory by typing:
CD \EPIC

Then go into the 1st sub-directory by typing: **CD \DEM01**

Then type: **INSTALL** and follow the instructions on the screen.

To run the games, make the directory that the games were installed to current, then follow the instructions below.

To run *Epic Pinball* type: **SETUP** to configure the sound etc.

Then type: **PINBALL**

To run *Solar Winds* type: **SOLAR1**

Ken's Labyrinth & Ancients

Ken's Labyrinth is basically *Wolfenstein* in your house. Your job is to craftily dodge all the monsters, such as massive creepy crawlies, and pick up the goodies to survive. Good hunting.



(Above) You and your mates take to the evil highways in *Ancients*.

Ancients is a graphic adventure game, where you and a team of three companions have to tackle the evil menace that threatens the city.

Both programs have numerous key controls which are listed by pressing **Escape** once the game is up and running.

To install either *Ken's Labyrinth* or *Ancients* to your hard drive, make the drive that contains the CD-ROM current by typing, for example: **D:**

Then go into the *Epic* directory by typing:

CD \EPIC

Then go into the 2nd sub-directory by typing: **CD \DEM02**

Then type: **INSTALL**

and follow the instructions on the screen.

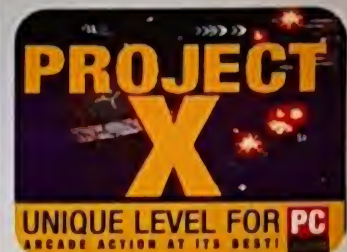
To run the games, make the directory that the games were installed to current, then follow the instructions below.

To run *Ken's Labyrinth*, type: **SETUP** to configure game.

Then type: **KEN**

To run *Ancients*, type: **BEGIN**

(Below) One of the many delightful creatures you'll come across in *Ken's Labyrinth*.



HD Disk Help

If your cover disk won't load, operate or is being generally awkward, you can call the technical help line:



Prosoft Logistics

081 890 8290

**(9am to 5pm
weekdays only)**

• Please note that this help line is for HD disks only, for CDs see following page.

• If possible, have your computer operating with your cover disk near to the phone when you call.

• If your computer isn't near a phone, note down as much information about your system as possible, and the nature of the fault.

• Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you ring.

• If you are advised that the disk is faulty and needs to be returned, send it in a padded envelope with two 19p stamps to:

PC Zone Disk

Returns 18

Prosoft Logistics

3 Space Way

Feltham

Middlesex

TW14 0TH

Traffic Department

Armed with a space ship, your task is to weave your way round narrow roads and kill people. Sounds like a traffic warden's fantasy. This program supports a joystick, if you've got one, otherwise you should use the cursor keys.

To install *Traffic Department*, make the drive that contains the CD-ROM current by typing, for example: **D:**

Then go into the *Epic* directory by typing:

CD \EPIC

Now go into the 3rd sub-directory by typing: **CD \DEMO3**

Then type: **INSTALL**

and follow the instructions on the screen.

To run the game, go to the directory that the game was installed to, then type: **TD1**

Electro Man & Heartlight

Electro Man is a classic platform game where, armed only with a super high-powered gun, you navigate various traps and collect power-ups.

Heartlight is an arcade game where you have to guide your dwarf around the screen, collecting jewelled hearts and avoiding getting squashed, blown up, or otherwise harmed on your travels. The game is controlled using the cursor keys and, if you get trapped, the escape will cause the dwarf to top himself, making you restart that level from scratch.

To install either *Electro Man* or *Heartlight*, make the drive that contains the CD-ROM current by typing, for example: **D:**

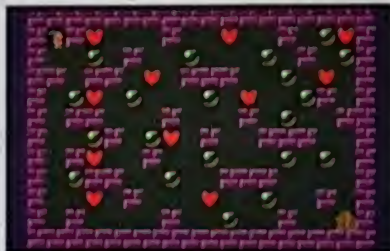
Then go into the *Epic* directory by typing:

CD \EPIC

Then go into the 4th sub-directory by typing: **CD \DEMO4**

Then type: **INSTALL**

and follow the instructions on the



(Above) *Heartlight*, a novel arcade game, brings out the romantic dwarf in you.

screen.

To run the games, go to the directory that the games were installed to, then follow the instructions below.

To run *Heartlight*, firstly type: **SETUP** to set sound etc.

Then type: **HEART**

and follow the commands given.

To run *Electro Man*, type: **SETUP** to configure.

Then type: **ELECTRO**

Zone 66

Zone 66 isn't, as it sounds, a good plug for PC Zone, but is in fact, a superb piece of arcade action, where you get to fly a highly armed aircraft around some unhealthy jungle terrain, looking for enemies to hassle you, which, of course, they do. The key commands can be brought up by pressing *Escape* in the game, then selecting *Help* in the menu.

To install *Zone 66*, make the drive that contains the CD-ROM current by typing, for example: **D:**



(Above) It's chocks away in the jungle as you belt around looking for unsuspecting targets in *Zone 66*.

Then go into the *Epic* directory by typing:

CD \EPIC

Then go into the 5th sub-directory by typing: **CD \DEMO5**

Then type: **INSTALL**

and follow the instructions on the screen.

To run the game, go to the directory that the game was installed to, then type: **ZONE66**

Jason Storm

Jason Storm is one of those platform games where the hero has to rush around collecting the goodies and avoiding the baddies - you know the type of thing.

The control keys are:

Cursor keys	= Move character
Control	= Jump
Alt	= Fire

To install *Jason Storm*, make the drive that contains the CD-ROM current by typing, for example: **D:**

Then go into the *Epic* directory by typing:

CD \EPIC

Then go into the 6th sub-directory by typing: **CD \DEMO6**

Then type: **INSTALL**

and follow the instructions on the screen.

To run the game, go to the directory that the game was installed to, then type: **STORM1**



VOUCHER



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Here Are Four New Reasons to Try Epic Pinball Today.



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The four tables shown above make up Pinball Pack #3. Individual packs are £23.99, two packs are £34.99, all

three packs are £45.99 or get the CD-ROM with all three packs plus an exclusive new table for only £49.99. All prices include V.A.T. and postage charges.

"Epic Pinball rings up a high score" - Computer Gaming World

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Here's How To Try It.

SHAREWARE TRY IT TODAY!

On CompuServe, GO EPIC. You can download an Epic shareware game virtually free every month and visit the Epic forum for hints, tips, technical support and to download our other shareware games. From GO EPIC you can also buy and download Epic games, like Pinball Pack #3, instantly. For a free CompuServe sign-up kit, call 0800 289378 and ask for representative #536. In Germany call 0130 2732, in USA/Canada call 800-524-3388.

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081 4023350

Almac BBS
0324 665371

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081 8135618

Internet users can find Epic shareware games in "/msdos/Games/Epic" on "ftp.uml.edu". You'll also find them in all the best shareware libraries.

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(Above) It's flipping hell in Epic Pinball.

Epic Pinball: Super Android

This is the sequel to *Epic Pinball: Super Android* (also on this disk). The important keys are:

- Left cursor key** = Flip left
- Right cursor key** = Flip right
- Space** = Nudge table

To install *Epic Pinball* make the drive that contains the CD-ROM current by typing, for example: **D:**

Then go into the *Epic* directory by typing: **CD \EPIC**

Then go into the 7th sub-directory by typing: **CD \DEM07**

Then type: **INSTALL** and follow the instructions on the screen.

To run *Epic Pinball* type: **PINBALL**

Xargon & KiloBlaster

KiloBlaster is a jazzed up version of the old classic, *Space Invaders*. Use the cursor keys to move, and press Space to fire.

Xargon is a platform game with a touch of adventure gaming thrown in to boot.

Press Escape during the game to call up the Help menu.

To install either *KiloBlaster* or *Xargon*, make the drive that contains the CD-ROM current by typing, for example: **D:**

Then go into the *Epic* directory by typing: **CD \EPIC**

Then go into the 8th sub-directory by typing: **CD \DEM08**

Then type: **INSTALL** and follow the instructions on the screen.

To run the games, go to the directory that the games were installed to, then follow the instructions below.

To run *KiloBlaster*, type: **KILO**

To run *Xargon*, type: **XARGON**

In both cases instructions will appear on screen.

Adventure Math

Adventure Math is an edutainment package that makes addition and subtraction fun. This demo is suitable for under 25s only.

To load up *Adventure Math*, go to the DOS prompt that contains the CD, e.g. **D:**

Then type: **CD \EPIC**

Once you've done this, go to the 9th sub-directory by typing: **CD \DEM09**

and then type: **INSTALL**

There will then be a full set of instructions.

To play *Adventure Math*, go to the directory where it was installed and type: **AMATH**

Jill Of The Jungle, Brix & Overkill

Brix is a Tetris style of brain teaser where you have to move matching bricks together. It starts off easy, but gets much harder as you progress.

Overkill is a scrolling arcade game, where you have to blast your way through waves of alien craft. You can pick up power-ups to



(Left) Relieve yourself with Castle Of The Winds.

improve your firepower which, as you progress, are essential.

If you haven't overdosed on platform games yet, we've got another with *Jill Of The Jungle*.

With all of these games, pressing Escape calls up a Help menu, which allows you to see key controls etc.

To install *Jill Of The Jungle*, *Brix* or *Overkill* make the drive that contains the CD-ROM current by typing, for example: **D:**

Then go into the *Epic* directory by typing: **CD \EPIC**

Then go into the 10th sub-directory by typing: **CD \DEM010**

Then type: **INSTALL**

And simply follow the instructions on the screen.



(Above) It's Yar Boo Sucks to Tarzan and hello feminism with *Jill Of The Jungle*.

To run the games, go to the directory that the games were installed to, then follow the instructions below.

To run *Jill Of The Jungle* type: **JILL**

To run *Brix* type: **BRIX**

To run *Overkill*, surprise surprise, type **OVERKILL**

Dare To Dream & Castle Of The Winds

Dare To Dream is a point and click adventure game. *Castle Of The Winds* uses both mouse and cursor keys (for movement). Both of these games run under Windows.

To install either *Dare To Dream* or *Castle Of The Winds*, make the drive that contains the CD-ROM current by typing, for example: **D:**

Then go into the *Epic* directory by typing: **CD \EPIC**

Then go into the 11th sub-directory by typing: **CD \DEM011**

Then type: **INSTALL** and follow the instructions on the screen.

To run the games, you will need to follow these instructions:



Go to the Windows directory and type:
WIN e.g. **CD \WINDOWS**

Then type: **WIN**
Once you are in Windows, you should click on the file manager icon. When the file manager icon is open, double click on the directory that either of the two programs were installed to. This should then list the contents of the directory. Once this is opened you should follow the instructions below:

To run *Dare To Dream*, find the file labelled **SBSETUP.exe** and double click on it. This will allow you to configure your sound board. Once you've done this, double click on the file titled **D2D.exe** and this will take you into the game.

To run *Castle Of The Winds* double click on the file titled **CASTLE1.exe** and this will take you into the game.

Outpost

This is the latest release from Sierra, and so to tie in with this we have a 10 minute rolling demo that shows you the best of the game. The graphics are stunning and, if this whets your appetite, there's a review of the full game in the CD-ROM section of the magazine.

To run the demo, log onto the drive that contains the CD-ROM. e.g. **D:**

Then go into the Sierra directory by typing the following command: **CD \SIERRA**

Then go into the Outpost sub-directory by typing: **CD \OUTPOST**

Then type: **DEMO**

Now sit back and enjoy.

Editors

We have compiled a few games editors this month that will let you modify (i.e. cheat) each game.



(Above) Are you brave enough to Dare To Dream?

To use the editors, make the drive that contains the CD active, by typing, for example: **D:**

Then go into the editors directory by typing: **CD \EDITORS**

Then type: **DIR**

This will bring up a list of editor sub-directories. Chose which editor you wish to use by typing, for example: **CD \UFO**

Once you are in your chosen directory type: **EDIT README.TXT**

and follow the instructions on screen.

Off The Boards

We are introducing a section on the CD-ROM dedicated to all the programs covered in this month's *Off The Boards* reviews. So not only can you read all about them, you can play them as well.

This month's *Off The Boards*, which isn't in the *Epic* section, can be accessed as follows.

Firstly, make the CD drive current by typing, for example, **D:**

Then go into the directory called **OTB** by typing: **CD \OTB**

Then type: **OTB**

and follow the instructions on screen.

Doom

This improved version of *Doom* has improved modem and serial linking, a new version of death match, bug-fixes, Sound Blaster AWE 32 support, and other goodies.

To install *Doom* to your hard drive, follow the procedure below. Firstly, make the hard drive current by typing the drive letter, followed by a colon. e.g. **C:**

Then make a directory that you wish *Doom* to install to, by typing: **MD "directory name"** e.g. **MD Doom**

Then make the drive with the CD active by typing, for example, **D:**

You should then go into the *Doom* directory by typing:

CD \DOOM1_4

Once you are in the directory, you should type the following:

PKUNZIP DOOM1_4.ZIP C:\ [the directory name e.g. DOOM1_4]

This will then install *Doom* 1.4 to the hard drive.

To play *Doom*, go to the *Doom* directory on the hard drive and type: **README**

This will give a detailed explanation of the improvements. You can then play *Doom* as normal by typing: **DOOM**



CD Help

If you have a problem installing any of the programs on the CD, then you can call:



Miles Tudor

071 917 7693

**(2pm to 6pm
Weekdays only)**

• Please note that this help line is for CDs only, for HD Disks see previous page.

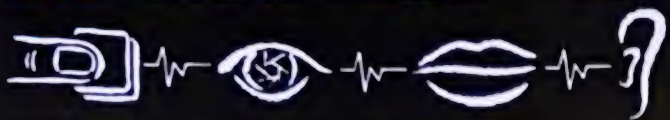
• If possible, have your computer operating with your cover disk near to the phone when you call.

• If your computer isn't near a phone, note as much information as possible i.e. system type, resolution etc., and the nature of the fault.

• Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand.

IMPORTANT

Some of the programs on the CD are shareware and, as such, are supplied as an evaluation service to our readers. If you like the programs and intend to continue using them, you should register them with the publishers concerned. In return you will receive updated versions, extra levels and loads of other stuff. There is even a special offer for readers of *PC Zone* to qualify for a discount in registering any *Epic* programs! The cover disk has been virus checked, however, neither Dennis Publishing, *PC Zone* or any associated companies can be deemed liable for any problems that may arise from use of this disk.



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Blueprint

Ka-50 Hokum

PUBLISHER: Virgin

PRICE: £39.99

TELEPHONE: 081 960 9900

RELEASE DATE: Sept 26 1994



A game that combines a helicopter flight sim with bloodthirsty pirates? Simon Bradley was intrigued – but did he get “hooked”?



IT HAS become increasingly clear over the last few years that pirates are no longer the cheery swash-bucklers that Errol Flynn would've had us believe.

In fact, it's probably true to say that they are among the most ruthless, bloodthirsty bastards to be found outside of Millwall Supporters Club.

The Spanish Main has been abandoned as the happy hunting ground, mainly because there are far richer pickings to be had elsewhere for much less risk. Instead, your average aquatic psychopath hangs out around the South China Sea, loitering in the marine equivalent of dark alleys and waiting for some poor sod to bumble past. Trouble is, you see, that large ships have to slow down to navigate through the masses

of islands which festoon the shipping lanes between Hong Kong and the rest of the world. And as we all know, if you want any kind of electronic gadget and other luxury goods, the chances are that Hong Kong is involved somewhere.

So your pirate just waits with his gang of cut-throats and a fastish motor boat until a suitable looking ship gets close and slows down. Then the pirates just come alongside, board the ship, take whatever they want (sometimes it's the whole vessel), murder the crew (after taking their pleasure with any who may be suitable for such

activities) and then go on their way.

This is not only bad for the shipping companies, who find it difficult to recruit crews to replace their perforated colleagues, but also for the multi-nationals who find themselves losing money. And we all know that although the loss of life won't make anything happen in a hurry, multi-

(Right) Each mission will require different tactics and a careful selection of weapons. (Below) Missions vary from simple recon flights to going in and blasting everything that moves.





national corporations can move mountains when it comes to protecting their investments. So what happens? The pirates get better armed and a bit bolder. Far from lurking around in caves and the like, they come out in broad daylight to carry out their nefarious activities. They get bigger boats and bigger guns. The multi-nationals lose more money and start to lean on the local governments. They whine and make a show of catching some minor player in the scheme of things. They beat the crap out of him and string him up as an example. Needless to say, the other pirates couldn't give a toss, and things continue to escalate. By now, the pirates are using light aircraft to spot likely targets, and have amassed some serious hardware. They are probably also moonlighting for the drug cartels,



The game is much less a simple arcade style shoot 'em up, but more of a strategy flight sim which requires you to manage your resources and plan your attacks against the dastardly pirates. In order to be successful you must co-ordinate your attacks with planned precision, which involves flying precise missions, defining patrol patterns and making the best of your somewhat limited resources. For example, as the game evolves, you could also find yourself planning recovery missions for pilots who have ejected over enemy territory and are being held prisoner. Your unit must therefore be flexible and efficient in order to survive.

either escorting shipments or intercepting rival suppliers' deliveries, so the cash is coming in thick and fast. The multi-nationals are seriously pissed off and there have been embarrassing questions in the Board Room.

Time for action. They hassle a few Western governments who see an opportunity for glory and to divert a bit of public attention away from their own domestic problems. Therefore, an international support team, armed to the back teeth and with a sanction to do whatever is necessary to protect the balance of payments is sent to the area.

If you think that this sounds like a good basis for a game, you're not alone. Virgin obviously agree whole heartedly with you, because Ka-50 Hokum is set in the South



The graphics are pretty stunning all round, with detailed texture mapped backgrounds and varied terrains giving the game a "reach out and touch" feel. It all comes at a price though, and you'll need a pretty speedy processor to get the most out of the game.



China Sea, with you as the commander and ace pilot of a multi-national anti-pirate enforcement team.

The professionals

Your team of dedicated professionals is based on an amphibious warfare ship, and is tooled up with the latest and best combat helicopters available, as well as some older stuff. Because this is a true multi-national effort, your equipment includes Russian, British and US hardware, although for a change you don't get an Apache.

Transport and light attack work is handled by the Mil Mi-8 (Hip), with more interesting attack and reconnaissance falling to the Lynx. Traditional gunship stuff is handled by the Huey Cobra, while really serious assault, support, armed reconnaissance and anti-air operations are the domain of the eponymous Ka-50 (Hokum). The reason for the silly name, by the way, is that Hokum was the Nato reporting name given to the Ka-50 when it appeared (like Hip for the Mi-8, Fulcrum for the MiG-29 etc.). The baddies get a variety of toys (some of which can really spoil your afternoon), ranging from handguns right up to 57mm AAA, SAMs and helicopters. Yes, you guessed it, they have got the Apaches. And Hughes Defenders, which are nippy little buggers, but no real threat.

On to the game

So, on to the actual game. Although I only had a chance to play a beta version, and an incomplete one at that, several things became apparent pretty quickly. First of all, this is not an arcade game. The flight model is extremely good – and that means that you are probably more likely to kill yourself than any pirates unless, that is, you take the precaution of reading the manual first and concentrate on flying rather than hot-dogging around. On top of that, you get to play the game beloved of all *Tornado* fans. Yes, you too can be both crew members of a two-crew aircraft. That means that you get to leave your helicopter flying in whatever



state you got it, change seats and use the weapons systems, then change seats again and take over flying before you get made into dogmeat. Now, you don't have to do this, but if you like, you can set targeting to auto and the computer will do the business for you. But you want realism, right? And besides, manually guiding a missile onto the target is quite a giggle.

The next little surprise is the difficulty. The first target you get to, um, service is a real cakewalk. The next target is not much harder. But then things get more difficult in a sort of exponential way and it's not long before your ass gets toasted. Several times. Hint. If things looks bad, be sure to take the Hokum. Then at least if you do get fragged you have the option of ejecting and saving your life. And yes, that does mean that your next mission is very likely to be rescuing your alter ego from the clutches of the enemy you've landed on.

The Plot

Gameplay falls into three areas. Control the task force and move your ship around while keeping a eye on the tasks your pilots are performing. Then hop into a helicopter and fly some recon flights, identifying bases and other targets, then getting the hell out of the area before they kill you. Finally, go out there and kill everything that moves, land troops or rescue colleagues. The whole plot revolves around finding targets, assessing them and then taking them out, preferably while staying alive.

What's new?

Although this is an entirely new product, there are distinct signs of earlier Simis games within the system. The map and mission planner, although a little friendly to use, looks exactly like that found in *Harrier Assault*. Similarly, the views are "dynamic", although in this case at least they seem to work properly and be vaguely useful. The flight model is typically Simis well, giving little comfort to the arcade pilots who eschew realism in the name of entertainment, and seems to be almost spot on. True pedants will also notice that a shadow has now been included (hurrah!). This seems to lead pretty neatly on to the subject of graphics generally. The good news is that they are really rather nice. The objects are almost all texture mapped, and the terrain is excellent. In fact, the islands look so good that you half expect to see Judith Chalmers there on the beach. Even the sea looks right, at least until you get really low, when dots appear to give you something to reference on.

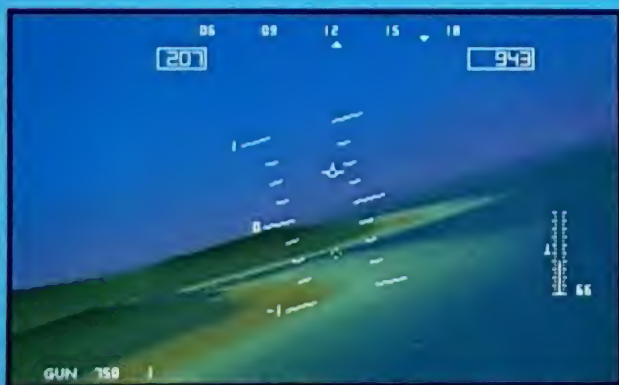
So, lots of Goraud shading and texture mapping makes the whole thing look sort of "real". Sounds are also good, with properly sampled noises instead of the indeterminate beeps and whistles you normally get. Put all this together and you have a pretty impressive package. But, of course, there is a catch. And that catch is processor power. In other words, we are talking about Miposuction here. Unless you want to crank the detail levels right down and put up with big time Jerkovision, don't even think about playing this on less than a 486px. Maybe it's time to trade up to the Pentium....

So, Is It any good?

This is the helicopter equivalent of, I guess, *Falcon 3*. The graphics are better than that illustrious package, but the world is small (and so the missions are limited). I don't know what happens once you've trashed the pirates and freed the seas for the passage of cheap electronics – I think that's about it. The flight model is excellent, and the game benefits from featuring the less common aircraft instead of the ubiquitous Apache.

Although I have so far only had a brief encounter with *Hokum*, I do feel that it falls firmly into the "sim" category, rather than "game". I also reckon that it's ripe for additions. There's a two-player option, but only head to head, and it's not over the network.

Is it any good? Well without a real rummage through all its dark corners, the jury will have to stay out for the moment. What I will say, though, is that from what I've seen so far, *Hokum* is the best helicopter sim since the original *Gunship*. And I actually paid money for that, so it must be good.





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Blueprint

Phantasmagoria: Terror In The Making

PUBLISHER: Sierra On-Line

PRICE: tba

TELEPHONE: 0734 303322

RELEASE DATE: December '94



(Above) Heroine, Adrienne Delaney, perfects the "babe" look just one more time during filming.

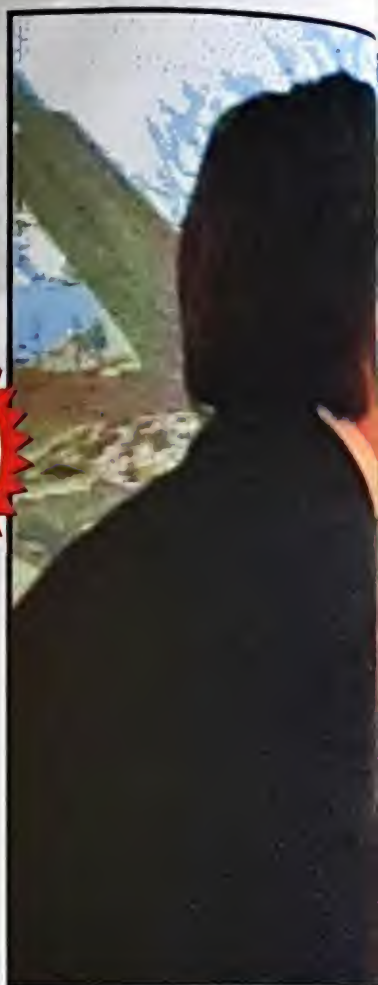
Jeremy Wells discovers all is not as it seems in the foothills of the Sierra mountains when he goes on location to take a peek at Roberta Williams' new, fully-interactive horror flick.

THEY'VE been filming since six o' clock this morning and by the time I roll up a little after nine, they're all just about ready for a time out. The director "cuts" and the crew break to take a look over the morning's work, go over their next scenes and grab a well earned cup of coffee. I'm here in Oakhurst, California, just outside the Yosemite National Park for an exclusive look at Roberta Williams' latest and greatest CD-ROM only interactive movie adventure, *Phantasmagoria*. It's a bit of a change of pace for Roberta, creator of the *King's Quest* series of games. Although Sierra have produced a number of "adult" orientated products, including the *Leisure Suit Larry* games and the groundbreaking *Gabriel Knight*, this is their first venture into the fully interactive movie market: there's a lot riding on this little number and everyone working on it knows it.

Over in the corner I notice the props man who is busy painting over marks on the floor. All the action is filmed against a bright blue background which enables the

actors to be "tv magically" lifted out of the studio and placed inside any graphics-rendered background or scene. The actors' shoes keep scuffing the floor, leaving marks that show up on camera. "I must have painted this goddam floor every day for the past three months!" the prop man curses. I mutter something about the Forth Bridge. He shoots me a puzzled look and smiles politely. I guess I should have swapped the "Forth Bridge" for the "Golden Gate" and he just might have got it. Oh well, never mind.

Also in the corner, tucked away behind a mass of lights and sound equipment sits our heroine, Adrienne, played by Victoria Morsell. She's pouring over a massive script and looking a little confused. This is no ordinary movie, it's a twisting, turning humdinger of a thriller with more subplots than an omnibus edition of *Crossroads*. It's not always easy remembering exactly where and when you are when you're performing in a vacuum of blueness with nothing but a monitor and the odd prop for company. Even the plot can get a little confusing at times.



Phantasmagoria: Terror In The Making BLUEPRINT



Everybody in the house tonight

Ah yes, the plot. In *Phantasmagoria*, you control Adrienne, a good, honest Catholic girl who has just moved into her dream home, an old Victorian manor house, with her photographer husband, Don. The house is located on a small island just off the east coast of the US and has been empty for many years. Everything is just cushty, but then Don starts acting a little weird. And what's the deal with all these nightmares you (aka Adrienne) keep having? In your old house you used to sleep like a log. None of your neighbours seem to want to talk much about the house - they haven't even popped round for coffee. And why was it empty for so long? Come to think of it, it sure was pretty darn cheap considering it's so big and beautiful and all. Could this mean that it's... haunted?

Before you can say "Stephen King", things start to go a bit pear shaped as you try to figure out just what's going on. You discover that the house was last owned by a magician called Carno and that he made the antics of Penn and Teller look like something from the *Paul Daniels Magic Show*. Not only did he regularly put the spooks up the locals, but he also took great pleasure in doing nasty things to his various wives. Altogether, not the kind of chap you'd invite round to pull things out of a hat for little Johnny's birthday bash.

To cut what promises to be a very long story short, Adrienne must attempt to unlock the dark secrets of the house and solve the mystery that surrounds her beautiful, though distinctly eerie home. If

(Top left) The story is partly told using flashbacks and dream sequences for a total "blast from the past" experience.

(Bottom left) Each scene has been beautifully rendered by Russian graphics artists. (Above) Prepare yourself for the ultimate spooky experience.



(Below) Seem's like a nice place - wonder why it was so cheap?





(Above) Hey! I think I'll go and explore this creepy looking room. After all, it's only full of old junk, right...? (Above right) I wonder why those bars are there? I sure hope it's not dangerous!

I said much more, I'd be giving too much away. Suffice to say there are more than a few surprises in store for Adrienne.

Cast of thousands

Up above the set in the technicians' booth things are starting to take shape as they run over the morning's work. Some scenes have to be re-shot, others aren't quite what Roberta wants so it's back to the storyboard for a bit of a re-shoot. Every shot is worked out meticulously beforehand in order that things look straight when the characters are finally placed inside their electronically created environment. On the wall of screens above the Producer's head are numerous different backgrounds: the lobby, dining room, cellar, garden etc. Each has been beautifully rendered on *Silicon Graphics Workstations* by artists in Russia, and they certainly look pretty special. Sierra has a reputation for having some of the best electronic artists in the business, and just a quick look at the scenes created so far should convince any onlooker that *Phantasmagoria* is sure to keep Sierra on top of the pile.

Roberta is the first to admit that when she first started to work on *Phantasmagoria* even she didn't quite know exactly what she was getting herself into. Although she

is quick to add that what the team has achieved so far is beyond her wildest expectations. "There's so much more to think about", she enthuses, "carpenters to hire to make the props, make-up experts, special effects people, as well as the usual catalogue of camera men, sound technicians and lighting crew. It's so much more involved than anything else we've ever attempted before."

Indeed, everything is on a much grander scale than ever before for Roberta as the boundaries between movie making and producing computer adventure games merge into one. "We've used the talents of both game designers and Hollywood to make *Phantasmagoria* as new and original as we can. All are recognised professionals in their own industry and it's all working pretty well, despite many of the techniques and equipment we're using being so new. I mean, before we started shooting a couple of months back, no one realised that we needed someone to look after continuity. It just didn't occur to anyone at Sierra - we've only really worked with voices before when it didn't really matter. We're a games producer, not a movie studio - it really is a whole new ball game. However, the director soon put us right on this as soon as we started shooting. As we've progressed we've

drawn on the talents from both industries and have come up with something very special. It's going to be like nothing else you've seen before."

Let's hear it for the gore

Whilst I'm being shown round the props room, it becomes pretty apparent that *Phantasmagoria* is not for the faint hearted. In one corner there's a rather gruesome looking wooden chair with cuffs that fit around the victim's wrists and ankles. Mark Seibert, the producer, laughs as he pulls away some of the foam rubber padding from the ankle chains. "We don't want to hurt our actresses too bad" he grins, tossing the metallic-painted padding into a corner. He motions for me to sit in the chair and then proceeds to swing a large funnel-like apparatus over my mouth. "We use this in one of the torture scenes - the victim is strapped into the chair and then forced to eat her entrails." He grabs a handful of what looks like rubber seaweed and pretends to force it down the funnel into my mouth. "Don't worry" he laughs. "the funnel's blocked off at your end!"

At the other end of the room someone is desperately trying to piece together a latex head that has been sliced in two by a swinging axe. He struggles to pop the final eye into place on the misshapen face. "She's not feeling too good at the moment" smirks Mark banging himself over the head with what I presume to be a rubber hammer. I spy a headless teddy bear on a shelf next to a dummy of a man chained to a galley. "We set fire to him last week," chirps in the propsmaster pointing to the charred body. "You should'a been here, there was blood everywhere!" I back towards the door. Out in the sun I quickly head back into the studio. I know they're probably used to the heat, but those guys really should think about keeping in the shade a little more.

Don't touch that gore button!

Back in the studio, I notice Roberta flicking through her storyboard and decide to quiz her on the contents of the prop room. She assures me that what I've seen is relevant to the plot and that Sierra are not messing about jumping on the pure gore-feast bandwagon.



(Below) Those Russians sure know their stuff when it comes to *Silicon Graphics Workstations*.



to sell their product, preferring to be more subtle in their use of graphic violence. "Most of the blood and guts scenes will be seen as flashbacks or visions that Adrienne has," explains Roberta, "Consequently, it's almost always used to set the scene and convey atmosphere."

My expression is clearly not one of complete agreement, forcing her to expand her case. "We haven't actually decided on what to include and what to leave out yet, that decision'll be made when we start to edit all the film we've shot. It just means that you have two cutting points: one before the gore where the camera cuts away to, say, a shadow or someone screaming, and one where you see the whole thing. We're also considering including a gore button where the player can select the gore rating before they start to play."

Not just your typical adventure

In case you were wondering, *Phantasmagoria* does have some things in common with your more run of the mill adventure. Your character is on screen most of the time and you use a mouse to pick things up, move them around etc. Altogether, it's a pretty simplified interface. The game also features some first-person "fly-by" shots: moviespeak for animated rooms a la *Seventh Guest*.

I can't really divulge much about the gameplay - it's all too early to say, although Roberta assures me that *Phantasmagoria* won't be another of your mediocre movies that blasts the player with snappy visuals, leaving very little in terms of gameplay. Many people become suspicious whenever you mention the words "interactive movie" and this is largely due to the recent crop of releases that have, unfortunately, given the genre a bad name. However, *Phantasmagoria* is different in that it has Roberta Williams stamped all over it, and that's quite a pedigree by anyone's standards. Even if you're not much of a fan of the other games she's designed, no one can deny that when it comes to story telling, she's one of the best.

Phantasmagoria is due for release near the end of this year and promises to challenge peoples' perceptions of what an interactive movie should be all about. Personally, I can't wait to see the final result. **W**

Behind the Scenes

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



7. What did poor ted do wrong...?

1 & 2. A team of special effects experts were brought in to make it all look convincing.

3. "A table for one, sir?" Sit in this chair at your peril.

4. Filming in the blue room.

5. Roberta Williams (far left) goes through the next scene with some of the cast.

6. Adrienne (Victoria Marsell) does a piece to camera.

Blueprint

Klick & Play

PUBLISHER: Europress Software

PRICE: TBA

TELEPHONE: 0625 859333

RELEASE DATE: Autumn 1994

Now anyone can create commercial quality games for *Windows*. At least, that's what Europress is claiming about its latest games authoring package. **Laurence Scottford** investigates.

(Right) Each object has a range of attributes which are set simply by clicking on the object and then making selections from menus and dialogue boxes.

(Below) At any stage of the development you can sit back and try out your new game.



IF you make up one of the many former Atari ST or Commodore Amiga owners who has graduated to the PC, then the name François Lionet may mean something to you. He is the author of the highly successful games authoring packages, *STOS* and *AMOS*. These provide ST and Amiga owners respectively with a BASIC-like programming language and



other tools with which to create professional looking games. A year and a half ago François began to sketch out ideas for a similar games creation package for the PC. Had he stuck to his original plan then *Klick & Play* would probably have been very similar to *AMOS* – a sophisticated language with tools specific to the PC's hardware. The problem with such a system is that you do need some programming skills to use it, and that necessarily limits its appeal to a relatively small number of technically minded PC owners. Fortunately, at an early stage of *Klick & Play*'s development, François

had a brain wave that was destined to open up the world of games development to anybody who could use a PC, regardless of their level of technical expertise.

The Windows solution

The way to give the new product mass appeal was simple: design it to run within *Windows*. The most popular visual shell for DOS provides a perfect environment, because it allows programs to be created visually; and since games are primarily visual applications, this is a very natural way to design them.

The process of creating a game with *Klick & Play* begins with a blank screen on which a level can be constructed. Using only the mouse, the designer can add some background graphics from a pre-defined set, or import some created with an external paint program. On top of this the designer can introduce other elements such as a main character, obstacles and enemies and so on. Again these can be selected from a large pre-defined library, but the more adventurous designer can create his/her own or modify the existing graphics using a built-in tool.

Each object is governed by a set of attributes which define how it moves, whether it responds to input from the keyboard or mouse, what it does when it collides with other objects and so on. All of these features are set using the mouse, simply by selecting items in menus or dialogue boxes; actions that any *Windows* user will be quite at home with.

Tetris revisited

The real joy of creating games with *Klick & Play* is that at any stage of the design process you can try running your prototype game to see what happens. If an event occurs which you haven't defined an action for (such as a player's character colliding with an enemy), then the program will stop and ask you if you want to add an action for that event. Getting your game to work

(Right) *Klick & Play* has been created by François Lionet, the brains behind the classic games authoring packages, *STOS* and *AMOS*.



properly couldn't be simpler.

The sheer ease with which games can be created with *Klick & Play* is best demonstrated by a rather bizarre encounter that François Lionet had at the recent Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago.



During the plane flight from Europe François had used *Klick & Play* on his laptop PC to recreate that classic game of quick-thinking strategy and mental reflex, *Tetris*, not for a moment anticipating that, once he got to Chicago, he would bump into the creator of the original *Tetris*, Alexey Pazhitnov. The latter was duly impressed by what he saw, calling it "a remarkable achievement". It's likely that *Klick & Play* will be the inspiration for many more reworkings of classic games and, hopefully, a fair few original ones besides. **Z**

SPECS

Minimum Memory: 4Mb

Minimum Processor: 386DX

Hard Disk Space Required: 14Mb (approx)

Graphic Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: Any *Windows* compatible sound card

Control: Keyboard, joystick, mouse

Comments: Requires *Windows* 3.1 (Not 3.11 compatible). 8Mb RAM, 33Mhz 486DX and local bus VGA card recommended.

Coming soon.

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Blueprint

Central Intelligence

PUBLISHER: Ocean

PRICE: £39.99

TELEPHONE: 061 832 6633

RELEASE DATE: Aug/Sept '94

Unlike the United Kingdom, Central American states are not renowned for keeping Governments too long. Before you know it, a coup has taken place and it's time to get used to those new bank notes again. Unfortunately for **Gareth Ramsey**, he happened to be on vacation there at the time.



(Main Pic) This is the main screen where access to different areas of the island can be found. Click on the map and a street level view comes up which can be used for targeting buildings and people.

SAO MADRIGAL, a small Caribbean island, has recently had a revolution (cue for a joke about revolting peasants?) (Not if you want to work again. Ed.) and the President has been overthrown. Backed with the support of most of the islanders, the new fascist dictator plans to cut off ties with the West and deal instead

with China. Shocked at this state of affairs, your crack team of undercover agents has been sent in to oust this evil dictator, restore the former President to power and set up trade again with the West, all for the good of the people. Oh yes, the discovery of oil on the island has made Sao Madrigal one of the richest countries in the area.

Military operation?

Not at all. This matter is far too delicate. Send in the military to storm the Palace and throw out the dictator and the inhabitants (who are at present backing him), will make your country look like evil imperialist scum, interested solely in their country's money, which you're not. No. For this operation to work, the subtle approach is required. A coup will not be successful if the people are still in favour of the Government, nor will it succeed if all the rebel guerrillas are in prison.

Your group is divided into three departments: Military, Political and Propaganda. Each department is led by a specialist in his field, and can carry out the type of missions they have been trained in. Have a quick read of the Departments box-out for a clearer picture.

Opposition HQ

Making contact with Rival Leader is a relatively safe task, although he is under the permanent monitoring of the state police. He must be kept informed of everything going on in the island - by feeding him an appetising meal of intelligence reports, he can often supply you relevant information back. Pay him regular visits and reap the benefits.

Students can be found all over the island at universities and colleges, and at last you can make them do an honest day's work - well, perhaps it may occasionally be

dishonest, but nevertheless it is work. Student supporters will help with Propaganda campaigns and can be kept loyal with bribes, but, as in real life, they will do anything for money and may be secretly working for the government.

The island's workers can also be used for information. Extract information and through well-organised propaganda and media support to gain their support, they can be called out on national strikes.





A game of pool

Central Intelligence is deep, and in many ways resembles a game of pool. Imagine, if you will, that each of the spots (your balls) are missions for your agent (the white ball) and that you're about to go for the most amazing plant in history - white hits spot, spot bounces off two stripes (both of which knock a spot into a pocket!), hits the black, leaving said ball sitting over a corner pocket, rolls down the table knocking the

final spot in and rolls in after it, leaving you to clear up by ousting the president. Well that's sort of what this game is like - small events can cause chain reactions leaving drastically changed outcomes, but a bit of careful planning and the ability to do 16 different things simultaneously in your brain, and you should finally be able to sink that black.

The game simulates 1360 people, all of whom have their own unique personality. Each problem, however similar to a previous one, will have to be thought out differently as it will involve different characters. The clock on the map screen is constantly running and the population all live regular lives - working by day and relaxing at home/dining out/going to the theatre at night.

Audio-visual nightmare

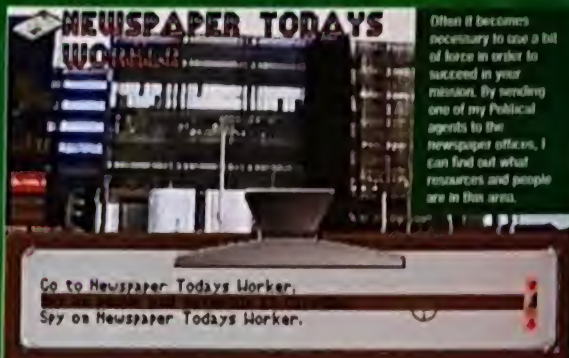
In the version that we looked at, the sound, as yet, isn't up to much. Arriving at a busy street, the hustle and bustle of daily life is played through your speakers for about 30 seconds while a still picture of the building you are visiting sits on the screen. It gets annoying after a while as these sort of sounds are just noise. Ocean promises, however, that there will be better sound and music added to the final version.

There are also a number of film clips in the game. Occasionally, when receiving an intelligence report from one of your agents, you'll have the option to view a film clip of the spy's work: a busy road junction

Departments

Military

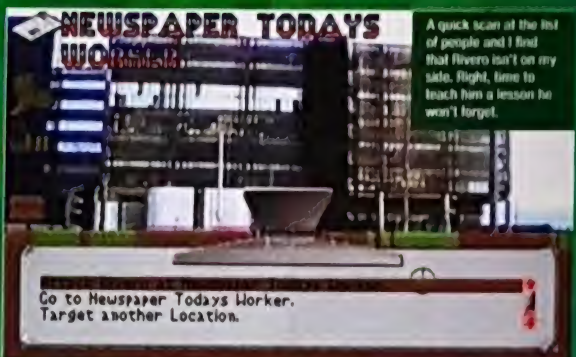
The Military department contains your highly-trained tough guys and, indeed, tough gals (one of my female agents came armed with a flame-thrower, wow). They can be used for such skilled missions as continually beating up the Head of one of the TV stations until he decides to favour the Rival leader or takes early retirement.



Often it becomes necessary to use a bit of force in order to succeed in your mission. By sending one of my Political agents to the newspaper offices, I can find out what resources and people are in this area.

Political

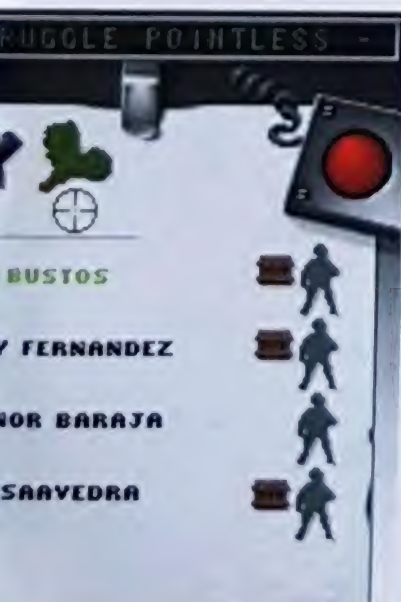
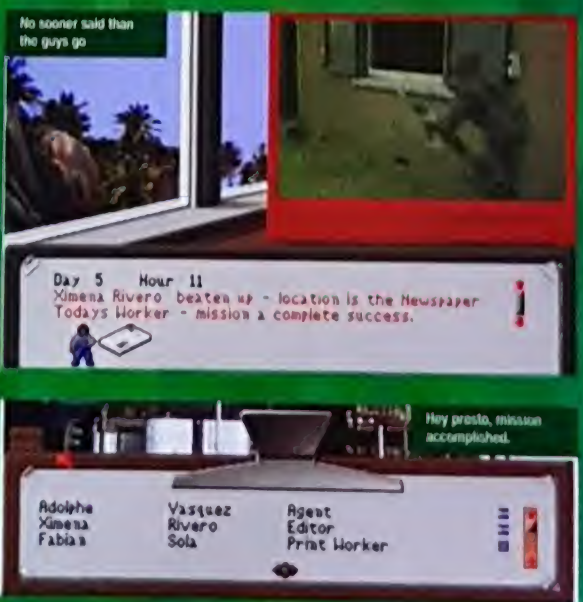
One of your most useful departments, the political agent can be used to make contact with important officials and, often by bribery, can extract information or manipulate them into setting up anti-government activities.



A quick scan of the list of people and I find that Rivero isn't on my side. Right, time to teach him a lesson he won't forget.

Propaganda

The distribution of posters and leaflets - "Fascist Dictators - no thanks" etc, and vital spying missions must be performed by your propaganda agents if you ever want to have the support of the island's people.



TV OFFICE EL BANTOS



(Right) What's that - double yellow lines, driving on the left-hand side of the road, familiar looking street signs and a GB sticker on the back of the car? Surely not in Central America!

with traffic; an aerial view of a busy roundabout with traffic, a short pan along the coast from a distance!

The feel of the graphics is very retro, resembling many earlier VGA strategy games, and they have a distinctly dated feel to them. Many of the photos (every location has one) are obviously of British buildings/streets and a large proportion are repeated many times, which could hamper the atmosphere of the final game. We'd like to see an SVGA option, and since the game is available as CD-ROM only, giving the programmers over 650MB of space to fill up, this allows ample room for more detailed photos of the locations your agents visit.

(right) The neighbourhood has really gone to pot since this new dictator came to power.

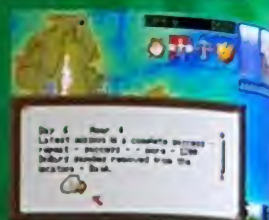
And the verdict so far is?

Ocean seems to have put a lot of effort into *Central Intelligence* and the gameplay is certainly not lacking. This is not the sort of game to play for half an hour and leave. The results of your efforts are often not immediately apparent, but once they come into bloom, it becomes quite addictive. It would be nice, however, to see the CD media used more to its full potential. *Central Intelligence* is going to be a game for those of you who like a challenge and have a full 64-bit multi-tasking head. **Z**

Free money?

At the start of the game, many of your agents will have resources on them, varying from broadcasting equipment to flame-throwers. These are going to be needed and then some. One of your priorities is to keep the rebel guerrillas supplied with arms and food, another is to make sure you have funds available in order to bribe high-ranking officials. So what do you do? You do what any honest secret agent does - you steal them.

Everybody needs a safe job and tonight your safe job is at the Bank. Send one of your agents out to spy on the bank and its surroundings, and when this information comes through you will have details of how much money is in the bank. Next thing to do is to highlight the money and re-target your operative on the bank and there you have the option for theft. Steal the money and treat yourself - you deserve it.



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PC ZONE

reviews

Games reviews Is what *PC Zone* is all about and this is where the reviews start. On the next 38 pages you'll find reviews of all the latest disk-based software. However, before you launch yourself into the most authoritative reviews pages around you might like to check up on what it all means.

ALL GAMES receive an overall mark out of 100. So, by definition that's a percentage, but if you want to call it "Out of a hundred" then you go ahead and call it "Out of a hundred". As a rough guide to interpreting the scores here's the guidelines we give to reviewers. (Not that they ever read them mind you. It can be quite heartbreaking at times....)

90+ (PC Zone Classic) Highly original idea or an exceptional, near "definitive" version of an old idea. Flawless in all departments and crammed to overflowing with long-term playability. Alternatively, the software company took the reviewer to Paris for the weekend.

80-89 (PC Zone Recommended) Extremely well executed and strong in all/ all but one department. High degree of originality.

70-79 Strong idea and well executed, but not necessarily very original. Weaknesses do not seriously impair playability, and it has a reasonably long life.

60-69 Games falling into the "If you like this style of game you'll like this. If not you won't" category.

50-59 Seen it all before, take it or leave it. Nothing special to recommend it but not abysmal either.

40-49 Dodgy. Still playable but probably only the once.

30-39 Seriously weak in idea and execution.

WHAT'S ON OUR HARD DISK?

Some games get installed, reviewed and then deleted. Others hang around a lot longer. This is what's currently nestling on our hard drive. Not necessarily the best games around, but the ones we keep coming back to.

UFO

Theme Park

Sim City 2000

Doom

Pacific Air War

20-29 The game is hopeless or the software company forgot the £50 cash bribe.

10-19 Bin jobs.

0-9 It didn't work. It crashed the PC and got jammed in the disk drive.

Is there anything worse than buying a game only to find it's not compatible with your machine? Yes, lots of things. Still it is a pain (and a waste of money) so check out the Specs box for a guideline to what memory, graphic and sound support you will need (or can use) with each game. However, please note that this is only a guideline - you should also check the packaging or confirm information with the retailer or software company.

Finally, the In Perspective box. Often, all that a review is saying is that a game is as good as that one but not quite as good as the other one. In Perspective attempts to illustrate this visually by rating the game in terms of other similar products. The "scores" given in this graph are relative to each other i.e. all examples might score highly in their own right but not against each other. ☹



TIE FIGHTER

X-Wing fanatic and Darth Vader groupie Charlie Brooker has never wanted the force to be with him. After sending the filth round to his place, we joined him for LucasArts' latest intergalactic romp as the ninja space saga continues...

(Above) So much space and nowhere to park. The Dark Side queue up to get out of the car park at Spaceways.



IF YOU'RE anything like me (get down on your knees and pray that you aren't), then you're probably one of those people who always finds themselves rooting for the bad guy at the cinema. Heroes annoy me; they're courageous, resourceful, well-balanced, handsome and tremendously lucky - in short, scum. The baddies are much better. Just think for a moment about some famous heroes: Superman, Tintin, Luke Skywalker... all of them as dull as dishwater. Compare them to a random selection of cads: Dick Dastardly, Mr Blonde, Macbeth... all far, far cooler, and they *always* have the best lines. Wouldn't you rather be like them?

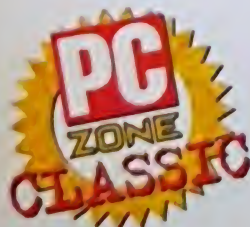
Well, now you can be. *TIE Fighter* is the sequel to LucasArts' classic *X-Wing*, the rootin', tootin', laser shootin' space combat sim. *X-Wing* is, to this day, one of my all-time favourite games on any system. It looked, felt, and sounded just right, enabling you to temporarily shrug off the belief that you were a faceless, insignificant inhabitant of our over-populated planet, and replace it with the assumption that you were a starry-eyed, prodigal space pilot, barrel-rolling past immense Space Frigates whilst pissing laser

beams over all and sundry. It had complex missions, a progressive storyline, and enough trigger-twitching excitement to keep even the most maniacal, coke-addled, battle-hardened psychopath off the streets and in front of the monitor. But there was one problem. You had to be a good guy.

Forces for courses

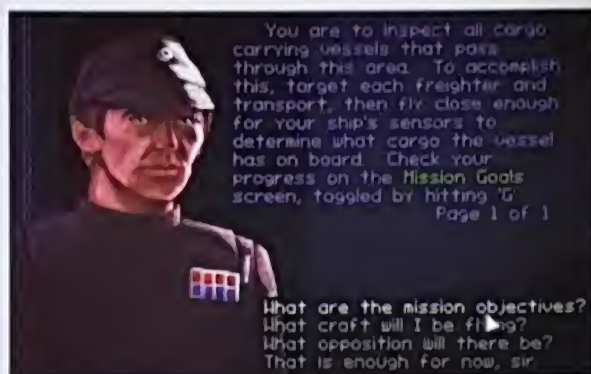
Well, fret no more, because thanks to *TIE Fighter*, you're a bad guy now. That's right, none of this long-haired, New Age, dope-smoking "Use the Force" nonsense. Why "Use the Force" when you can use your Concussion Missiles instead? That'll show 'em. Call themselves Rebels, do they? Let's see 'em rebel against 36 lashes of rapid-fire laser death, then. Hal Luke Skywalker? He's going home in an ambulance, mate.

Even if this was the only difference between *X-Wing* and *TIE Fighter*, I'd have been happy. The game engine was, in my eyes, faultless to start with. Some people, however, weren't entirely satisfied with the original. They turned up their noses and frowned, folded their arms and whinged about the graphics being a little sparse. They mumbled things about "Gouraud shading". "I'd have thought," they sneered, "that a company like LucasArts could have made it look a little more up-to-date." Then they went out and bought *Strike Commander*, marvelled at the texture-mapped, impeccably-shaded aircraft, drooled over the banal storyline, then discovered the sorry truth as they watched it chug along in jerko-vision. And unless they owned a Turbo-charged SuperPentium with go-faster stripes, they had to sit in a corner and cry like the sorry little children they are.





TIE Fighter REVIEW



(Left) "You're not my father! I'll never rule the universe with you!" - You'd better believe it kid!
(Top right) Choose your ship with care - they don't all have deflector shields, you know.
(Above) "I didn't expect the bloody Spanish Inquisition!" - "Ah-ha! Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition!"

They can shut up now. *TIE Fighter* features no end of Gouraud shading and texture-mapping and, while it doesn't improve the gameplay (which is perfect already), it does make it look a little prettier. Don't worry if your machine can't cope with all these calculations and slows everything down - all the enhancements are tweakable, and even on the lowest detail setting the game still looks magical.

So, you're a baddie this time, and the graphics have been enhanced. What else is new? Well, for one thing - remember the lovely deflector shields you had in *X-Wing*? That wonderful cushion of electromagnetic whatsit that lay between you and the cold harsh realities of space combat? Easily controlled at the flick of a switch so, if you were getting blasted from behind, you could transfer energy from the front shields to the rear ones? They were great, weren't they? *TIE Fighters* don't have deflector shields. What? But I'll get killed! Don't panic, don't panic. Some of the other ships you'll be flying will have. But *TIE Fighters*, *TIE Bombers* and *TIE Interceptors* (as opposed to *Advanced Ties*, the bulky *Assault Gunboats*, or the new, "secret" fighter) don't. It adds an air of urgency to the proceedings, as you might well imagine. You end up feeling like some kind of gigantic space fly, relentlessly buzzing the Rebel forces, always in danger of being swatted out of existence in a few brutal seconds. Watching your back is vital.

The overall layout of the game will be instantly recognisable to

(Below) It's not bad - you can shoot the blighters back.



X-Wing devotees. There's a similar main screen from which you gain access to training stages, historical missions (i.e. one-off battles), the main, "proper" missions themselves, the film room (where you can munch popcorn and watch the footage from your in-flight camera après-scrap), and, for the intergalactic train spotters amongst you, the Tech room, which can supply you with the complete specs for all the different craft you'll be flying, blowing up, or whizzing around.

If it's your first time flying an Imperial Starfighter (and let's face it, it is), then you'd be well advised to get a spot of training in first. This will help you to get the feel of your ship, familiarise yourself with the controls and test your reflexes. *TIE Fighter's* training section, unlike the ineffably tedious one in *X-Wing*, is good fun in its own right, requiring you to fly through a series of increasingly narrow, twisting corridors, blasting obstacles out of your way and squeezing through tiny nooks and crannies.

Once you've honed your piloting skills sufficiently, it's time to visit the "Historical Missions" section of the game. Here you'll learn how to handle yourself in a variety of combat situations. Helpfully, you're also given simultaneous help and instruction on the flight, teaching you step by step how to make the most of your fighter's targeting systems, thrusters, deflector shields, missiles, windscreen wipers, hi-fi and cigar lighter.

This is also the best opportunity for learning how each craft handles. To give you a fair idea, imagine that *TIE Fighters* are gnats, *TIE Bombers* are bumblebees, *TIE Interceptors* are eagles, and *Advanced TIEs* are six-million-dollar eagles with bionic claws and jet-powered wings. Oh yes, and *Assault Gunboats* are big fat London buses. With big fat guns on the front. In space.

Actually, it's probably best if you ignore all of that. I just got a bit carried away. So, you've undergone the training exercises, flown a couple of trial missions, tried out all the different craft and had skiploads of fun teaching them that Rebels a few lessons about the thin line separating that which is alive and kicking, and that which is dead and drifting around in dark space surrounded by chunks of debris. Well, joy oh joy oh joy. You've still got stacks of fun in store. Because you haven't scratched the surface yet.

There's still the "proper" missions to fly yet. The meat of the game. Only this isn't just any old meat. This is a generous helping of thick, chunky, lean, and tender, prime fillet steak. The missions are both



(Above) "You laughing at my helmet? You'll be laughing on the other side of your face before I'm finished with you.. Take that! And that! And that!"

complex and exciting. You get a real sense of "being there". Look to your right or left and you'll see other Imperial ships flying alongside you in formation. Be on your guard for ambushes and escape attempts. Out-run, out-maneuvre and out-gun the opposition every step of the way, or die in the attempt.

X-Wing aficionados will notice a few differences (aside from the aforementioned *TIE Fighter* deflector shield scenario). The targeting computer now gives you a live, zoomed-in image of your prey on-screen (as opposed to a static diagram in *X-Wing*). Now you can tell which way an opponent is about to turn by glancing at your dashboard, even if he's only a speck on the horizon when seen through the naked eye. This makes it slightly easier to track would-be cannon fodder.

You've Been Framed

Just like *X-Wing*, *TIE Fighter* gives you the opportunity to record and then view your performance. This is great fun, since you can watch the action from any angle, rewind and replay your favourite bits. It looks wonderful - you feel like you're in an editing suite, watching the rushes for George Lucas' latest masterpiece.

In fact, why not go the whole hog and get your best "films" transferred to videotape? Make a few copies, knock up an authentic looking front cover, and - bingo! - before you know it, you could be down the local car boot sale, shifting untold copies of something that purports to be "Star Wars 4" to naive sci-fi loons. Smart!

The in-flight map is now three-dimensional, allowing you to pinpoint your exact location in the hi-tech maelstrom. Better yet, in case you fell asleep during

your pre-mission briefing (or more likely, dived straight into the fight unprepared and impatient), you can now check up a checklist of mission goals which lets you know exactly what you've



Succumb To The Dark Side

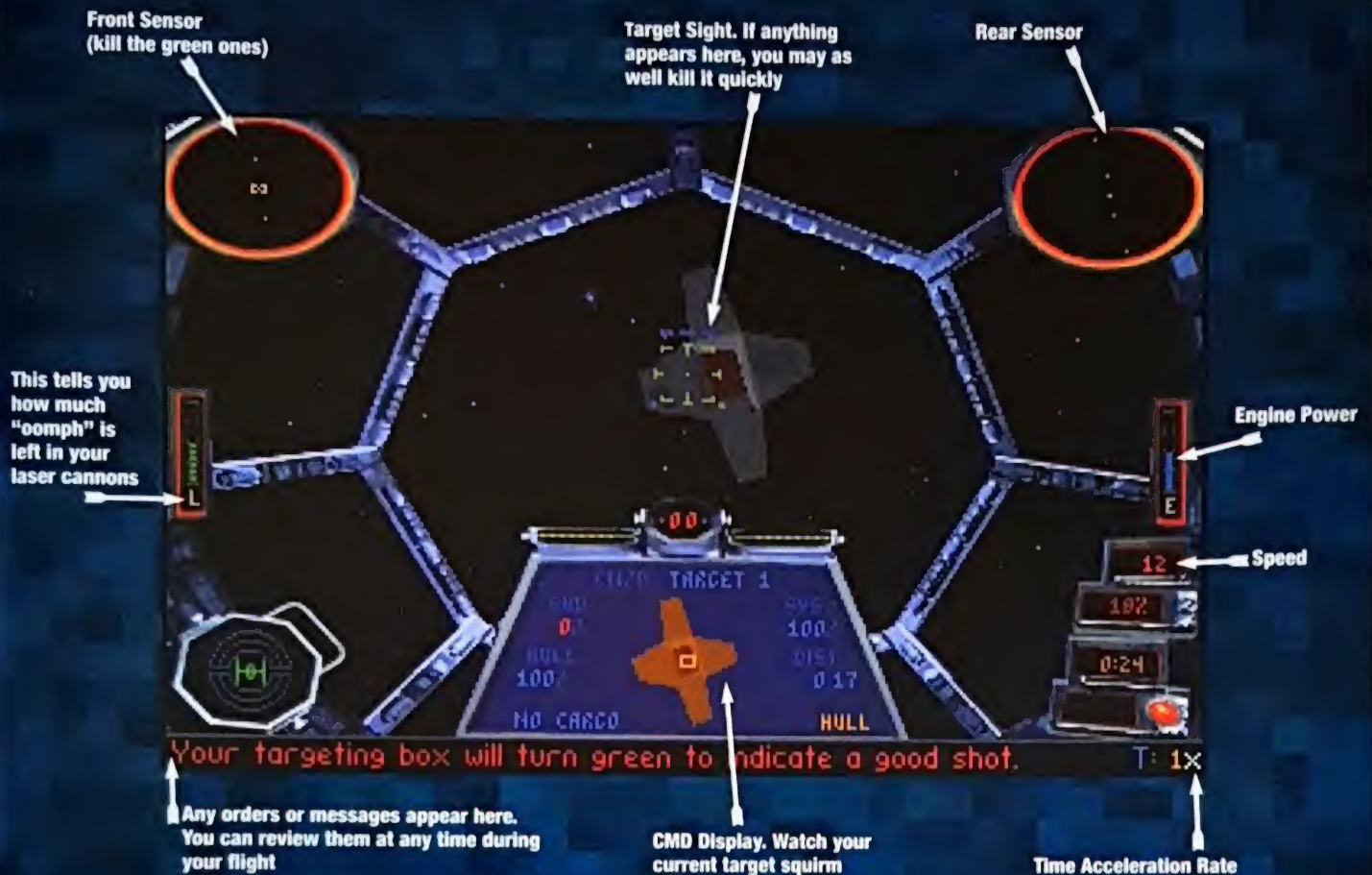
Pretty soon into the game you'll find yourself being recruited by the Emperor himself, as part of his secret society of elite pilots. This enables you to be double-sneaky during missions and spy on your own side.

This is all good fun of course, but best of all is the realisation that you're being not just a baddie, but a super-baddie. As the storyline progresses, you'll find yourself being "seduced by the Dark Side", just like rotten ol' Darth was.

As for the Emperor himself - well, he's quite breathlessly evil. Perhaps these anti-social tendencies date back to his childhood, or maybe he's just teed off with everyone and everything because he's got a face like a melted Action Man. Either way, he's a prime rotter, and it's comforting to know that he's on your side. Beats that fish-faced Admiral Ackbar who tells the Rebels what to do, anyhow.



The Fighter Cockpit View



achieved so far, and what you should be concentrating on doing next. Or would be doing next, if only that pesky A-Wing would get off your tail...

It's also possible to reload your fighter during a mission, so if you find yourself short on missiles (or the super-devastating new Space Bomb carried by the TIE Bombers), you can simply radio an ammo tug, which will dutifully chug towards you and perform a simple docking procedure.

The action is paced perfectly, so that all too often you think you're in the clear when bam! Up pops a lone B-Wing which blasts you into spacedust. The sound effects are perfect – tons of samples from the *Star Wars* films really add to the atmosphere, and the IMUSE system ensures that the musical score (adapted from John Williams' original soundtrack) reacts to the on-screen action in a disarmingly effective manner. There's a huge variety of missions – from simple "reccies" to full-blown assaults on gigantic space stations. All of them require concentration, planning and a quick trigger finger.

The Rebels themselves are formidable opponents, showing off their X-Wings and the like to great effect. There's even a

couple of Millennium Falcon look-alikes. Don't worry if you're a bit useless though, the game features three different difficulty settings, too, so cack-handed pilots and scared little children won't find the game overly daunting. *TIE Fighter* is of a rare breed: a brilliantly designed, atmospheric, action-packed piece of 100 per cent proof quality entertainment.

Wing Commander? Forget It

As anyone who's ever played one of their releases can tell you, LucasArts don't fuff about when it comes to a storyline. (If you've played one yourself, which I imagine, you probably have, then why not tell yourself out loud? Go on. Just for a laugh. You won't look like you're crazy or anything, honest.) That's just one of the things they're good at. It seems to come naturally to them.

They've got a head start here, obviously. Everybody loves the *Star Wars* films. And Obi Wan Kenobi, Darth Vader et al are mythical figures as relevant and tangible in our frazzled, media-saturated minds as historical figures such as Robin Hood or Lord Nelson. It's the perfect, fantastical environment for tub-thumping yarn-

spinning. *X-Wing* had a fairly solid storyline, but for my money it seemed a little fragmented – it felt like an aside, a complement to the action-packed blasting sessions rather than an integral part of them. Basically, I didn't find it that involving.

Not so *TIE Fighter*. You see, you start the game as a baddie, pure and simple. Soon, however, you're given a chance to become an exceptionally evil baddie – by joining the Secret Order of the abominably nasty, fiendish and dastardly Emperor himself. Suddenly you'll find yourself taking orders for the missions not just from your Flight Officer, but from "hooded figures" standing in shadowy corridors. These extra mission objectives usually take the form of

a bit of crafty surveillance work during the battle – a healthy dose of intrigue which adds to the thrills and spills immensely. It's great fun being a shifty little blighter.

Ooh what a lovely new X-Wing – shame I'm gonna have to blast it into a zillion pieces!





Just look at all that lovely posh Gouraud shading - it's pretty impressive stuff, eh?



especially when you're on the bad guy's side to begin with. Before long you'll be totally immersed in the plot, helplessly glued to your joystick as you try to complete an especially tricky mission, in order to find out what happens next. It drives you on. And on. And on.

It's important to back up your pilot. As you progress, and start earning medals and battle patches, you'll become rather attached to your Imperial persona. The last thing you want to do is go and lose him halfway through a particularly tricky campaign. You'll be so hooked on the story you won't be able to quit, and since there's over 50 (yes, 50) missions, you'll be at it for some time.

It makes me wonder really. Both *Strike* and *Wing Commander* purport to have "proper" storylines, but theirs are just lame, flailing, cliché-sodden retreads of every mindless gung-ho war movie you've ever seen, whereas *TIE Fighter's* is engaging and absorbing. I hope, nay, pray that Origin's scriptwriters are taking notes.

Jedi mind trick

"But I've already got X-Wing," I hear you whinge. "is it really worth splashing out again for the sequel?"

Yes, yes, and thrice yes. Everything that you loved about X-Wing is here. Only much, much better. This game oozes class like a slug oozes... er... slug juice. If you like flight simulators, you'll love *TIE Fighter*. If you like shoot 'em ups, you'll love *TIE Fighter*. If you like strategy games, you'll love *TIE Fighter*. If you have even a passing interest in science fiction, you'll love *TIE Fighter*. If you like being entertained, you'll love *TIE Fighter*. If you like action, adventure, thrills and spills you'll love *TIE Fighter*. If you hate yourself and want to die, you'll still love *TIE Fighter*.

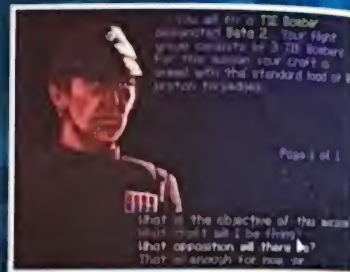
Do I have to spell it out for you? Listen to me. Read my lips. Obey my every command. What I want you to do is this: I want all of you to get up now. I want all of you to get up out of your chairs, go to the front door, open it, walk to your nearest software dealer, and demand a copy of *TIE Fighter*. Buy a sweat-resistant joystick while you're there because you'll need it.

Then go home, call up all your friends and tell them that you're going away for a very, very long time. Then call your place of work and tell them that you're quitting. Sit in front of your PC (make sure you

The "Ooh! That's New!" Department

Here, in no particular order, are just a few of the new additions to the old X-Wing engine:

- Gouraud shading (to keep those fussy train spotters quiet).
- The ability to ask your flight officer questions about the mission before you fly out - remarkably handy, this.
- New weaponry, and the ability to reload your missiles in mid-space.
- A vastly improved training section.
- A scaleable, spinable three-dimensional map.
- Three difficulty settings.
- A "Time Accelerator" for those dull "flying back to the mothership" moments.
- In-flight instruction during the practice missions.
- An enhanced targeting system with close-ups of your prey.
- Two-faced pandering to the Emperor.
- Ships with no shields.
- An in-flight checklist of mission objectives.
- Improved sound effects and the original *Star Wars* musical score.
- A much better storyline.
- You can tackle the three main campaigns in any order you like.
- And most important of all - You're one of the bad guys!



have sufficient food and water for a couple of weeks within arm's reach - and a bed pan will definitely come in handy as well. Install the game and let yourself get whisked away. In social terms you may well be a sad shell of a human being, but hey, who cares? You certainly won't.

And for those of you who don't follow my advice, I can only suggest that you put up your PC, and smash it into a million bits. Preferably over your own head. ☒



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THEATRE OF DEATH



It's another reviewing mission involving guns, hardship, fear and certain death. As usual, we volunteer **Patrick McCarthy** for the job.

TO JUDGE from the title, you'd imagine that this game was some kind of heaven-sent opportunity to take violent revenge on the reams of preening, pouting luvvies who've sullied our lives over the years. *Theatre of Death* - what a concept. Something similar to *Stunt Island*, but instead of replica buildings and sets you have replica actors: a digitised collection of all the foulest "celebrities" in the world and a huge variety of implements and objects with which to kill the bastards.

Just imagine it. A game that gave you the chance to unload a starter pistol into John Sessions' smugly smirking face, hack Kenneth Branagh's head off with a blunt dessert spoon or smother John Malkovich in his sleep by filling his mouth and nose with Play-Doh: it would sell by the billion. You could save your favourites to disk and show them to your fascinated friends. What scintillating conversations you'd have. "Look," you could say, "I've shut that kid from the Oral-B toothbrush adverts in a refrigerator. You can hear his muffled cries growing fainter."

"That's nothing," someone would reply, "I've reduced Les Dennis to a shadow of his former self with a cheese-grater."

"Les Dennis? But he isn't an actor."

"I know, it's an add-on disk. You should see what I've done with Virginia Bottomley, a fairground slide and an egg-whisk."

The most useful thing on this screen is the "music off" button.



Somebody always loses their head at times like this.

Unfortunately for us all, *Theatre of Death* allows for none of the above possibilities. In fact, it all looks vaguely familiar. Ever heard of a game called *Cannon Fodder*? Of course you have - it's been at the top of the charts since it was released.

Familiarity breeds contempt

Cannon Fodder has you dashing around an area of land in control of a few small (but perfectly-formed) troopers. The land can be anything from a desert to a polar ice-cap; the enemy are numerous and heavily armed; the missions range from killing the enemy to blowing up their creches or taunting them about their unfashionable uniforms, and the game overall is an increasingly frenetic tactical shoot 'em up with a beautifully judged difficulty curve. *Theatre of Death* has tried to copy it.

You only have to look at the controls for the game to see the "influence" that *Cannon Fodder* has had on *Theatre of Death*. *Cannon Fodder* uses the left mouse button to move your troopers around, the right mouse button to aim and fire weapons, and both mouse buttons simultaneously to throw a grenade; *Theatre of Death* uses the left mouse button to move around, the right mouse button to aim and fire weapons and both mouse buttons simultaneously to

select a different weapon. (At the start of the game, this also happens to be a grenade.) Unsurprisingly, *Cannon Fodder* also has vehicles to take over and use for your own evil ends, including tanks, jeeps, choppers and





skidoos. *Theatre of Death* has tanks, armoured personnel carriers, helicopters and landing craft.

Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery

There are one or two things that haven't been directly lifted from *Cannon Fodder*. There's the capacity to call in air strikes, which has been lifted from *Syndicate*, and the multiple camera views which follow the progress of your various leaders, which has been lifted from *Special Forces*. Enough of the similarities.

Don't think that there aren't any innovations in *Theatre of Death*, though. It's branched out on its own in many areas. Take the scrolling, for example: just to be different, the programmers have decided they want their scrolling on the dodgy side. Use the mouse to make your men run to the left, and you'll soon find them up against the edge of the screen. Theoretically, having the mouse cursor to the left should mean the view scrolls that way. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that well and the view simply wobbles about a lot. As an admission of this fact, you can scroll the game manually with the cursor keys.

Games people play

Gameplay generally is faulty: occupying a vehicle is a simple thing: you walk into it, then use it to run the enemy over. Unfortunately, once it's occupied, your other men also get "run over" if they accidentally walk into the tank, even though it's stationary at the time.

Using the tank is a pain. The enemy tanks have big guns, but you only have a machine gun (even if you get out of your tank and get into one of theirs), so in a tank battle you invariably get blown up. The collision detection is ropey, too – a

vehicle touching a solid background object has to be manoeuvred away in another direction entirely in order to free itself, and all the while the screen wobbles about as you move the cursor, and people are throwing grenades at you. These kind of fast-action games rely on excellent control, and *Theatre of Death* simply doesn't have it.

Music maestro

To make it more like a proper shoot 'em up, it even has some awful in-game music; it sounds like the theme from an American sitcom played through a Peruvian anal flute by someone with chronic diarrhoea. Couple this with the poor gameplay and the tedious manual, chocka with "kill, maim and destroy" jokes, and you have the perfect gift for someone you don't particularly like. **24**



Men in the water, helicopters in the air and some trees. It's captions like this that make this magazine.



SCORE

**Below average
imitation of an
above-average
game.**

Minimum Memory: 570K; 720K EMS

Minimum Processor: 386

Hard Disk Space Required: 7Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: Sound Blaster/Pro,

AdLib/Gold, Roland, LAPC1, Gravis

Ultrasound,

Controls: Mouse

Price: £34.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Psygnosis Tel: 051 709 5755



The Combat Screen

- ① How much ammo you have.
- ② How well (or ill, if you're a pessimist) you are.
- ③ Your map co-ordinates.
- ④ Satellite camera re-set. Allows you to focus on different members of your team.
- ⑤ Weapons menu. Shows you the weapons you have available for the current mission.
- ⑥ Timer. Later missions have a time limit – over-run and it's Hello Mr Death.
- ⑦ Score. You get a score according to how many people you kill, buildings you urinate against, tyres you let down, etc.
- ⑧ Troop Identity Indicator. Lets you know if the geezer you're pointing at is one of yours or one of theirs.
- ⑨ How many people are still left alive on the battlefield.
- ⑩ Your rank.
- ⑪ Message window. Displays a not especially wide range of gung-ho phrases in pseudo military speak.

"It's a Game of 2 halves"

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1934

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Viva Futbol! **REVIEW**

VIVA FUTBOL!

World Cup year has prompted the release of approximately five billion football games as games companies feverishly try to cash in on the event. All over the world, crack squads of programmers, many of whom wouldn't know a football from an inflatable sex toy, have been locked into a room and told they can't come out until they've produced something that can vaguely be tied-in with the splendid marketing opportunity that the world's greatest knockout competition has become. **PC** **WORLDWIDE** looks at two more games which have been added to the ever-expanding heap and provides you with a completely partial coming-up of the other games scrambling for your attention.



Fifa International Soccer



IFA INTERNATIONAL SOCCER caused a bit of a sensation when it was released on the Mega Drive just before Christmas, but it also caused something of a debate. More of that later. First, let's see what you get.

Teams, games and things

There are the expected selection of ways to play - exhibition games, leagues to set up and world championships to contest. The team tactics screen is particularly extensive, allowing you to select a style of play; choose a formation; substitute the (fictional) players accordingly and decide how much ground your defence, midfield and attack will cover. Unfortunately, it doesn't save these selections from one game to the next in a league or cup campaign. Still, you can get to these screens at any point during a match. You can even change sides mid-game if you're subjected to particularly heavy pressure by your local drugs cartel.

In-game

In-game controls are similarly extensive, allowing for diving headers, slide tackles, bicycle kicks and shoulder charges, and it's all beautifully animated. In fact, as you can see from the screenshots, the graphical detail is superb - you can practically see the unchewed food in a fan's mouth and spot which players shave their legs. It looks and sounds absolutely brilliant. And this just about sums it up. Moan alert.

The trouble is...

The trouble lies with the origins of the game. It's based on the game engine for EA's mega-selling (and totally fabulous) *John Madden (American) Football* on the Mega Drive. The problem is that the players are too intelligent. Too often they do things on their own; usually when you were planning on doing something else with them.

With American football, you want a lot of computer involvement; with "proper"

football, all you really want is the players you aren't controlling to react to the position of the ball, more or less hold the chosen team formation, and be available to dive in with a



hideously violent tackle as soon as you take control of them. This is precisely what you don't get with *FIFA Soccer*.

So what do you get?

You can pass to a player, take control of him and find the player you've just released makes a sliding tackle on his own, putting the ball into touch. Or you shoot, the goalie hits it out again, and you try to get it with your other forward; unfortunately, he's already dived for a header and is



now lying prone on the floor nearby. It goes on and on. Put simply, there's too much computer involvement.

Passing and shooting

The passing system doesn't work very well. Rather than holding the button down after you've kicked the ball for aftertouch, *FIFA* does it the other way around: you have to hold down in advance, then release the button, to get any distance on a pass. Just tapping the button for a quick pass usually doesn't get a quick enough response and you end up running along with the ball, battering the pass button like a shoot 'em up freak.

There's a seemingly random element to the scoring: you can hit an absolute scorcher from the edge of the area which will be tipped over the bar by the goalkeeper, then try a far weaker effort from



Beautifully-animated goalies in *FIFA International Soccer* make frantic goal-mouth action a more aesthetic experience.

the half-way line that scores. So, the game invariably deteriorates into a series of shots, the ball whizzing around the pitch like a glorified version of Pong.

Suddenly

The worst part of it all is that occasionally you'll suddenly get a feel for just how good the game could have been. If it only had a touch of the arcade competence of some other games it could have been superb. As it is, it looks glorious, but plays slowly and often seemingly without input from you.

This is where the debate comes in. When the Mega Drive version was released, some people were prepared to accept the shortcomings in the gameplay just because the visuals and sound effects are so great. But using those criteria, *The 7th Guest* is the greatest RPG ever made. So, although the score of 70 isn't that bad, bear in mind how much of the score is down to the graphics.

70

SCORE

Looks and sounds great, but lacks gameplay

Minimum Memory: 4Mb RAM

Minimum Processor: 386

Hard Disk Space Required: 7Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: Just about everything

Controls: Joystick, keyboard

Price: £39.99 Release Date: Out Now

Publisher: Electronic Arts Tel: 0753 55412



SENSIBLE SOCCER
International Edition is, essentially, the World Cup version of the all-conquering original. Make that "all-conquering

original (Amiga version)." On the Amiga it's the only computer football game to have inspired a religious cult. Its followers worship nightly by the light of their monitors, chanting the holy "crowd sample" mantras and humming the theme tune (which - crime of crimes - has been changed for this version); they wear nothing but nylon replica football shirts and subsist on mystery meat pasties and Bovril. Parents all over the country have written to Esther Rantzen, the gutter press and their MPs in an attempt to expose the cult, but to no avail. Is there a conspiracy at the highest level of government? Or are the powers that be supporting this evil movement - if only because it shuts up the hyperactive little ram-raiders for a while?

Sadly, for PC owners hoping to join the cult, the game in its PC incarnation doesn't quite cut the mustard in the hopeless addiction stakes. This is mainly because of the speed of the game: where the Amiga version is perfectly judged, striking a fine balance between giving you a pacy game and allowing the time to pull off a few Gheorghii Hagi-style, long-distance lobs into the net, the PC version races along at around twice the speed. This version suffers from exactly the same problem - even with the turbo switched off. When it was released we bemoaned its faults at some length (largely because we were so disappointed after playing the Amiga version so much in the office) so I won't go through them all again here. However, despite its faults, for some time it was still the best football game available to desperate PC owners, and it sold accordingly.

What's new?

At the time it was released it seemed a little late to still have the World Cup Qualifiers as its main competition for national teams, since once you'd finished the qualifying group, that was the end of it. This release sets out to correct that, allowing you to play your way through the World Cup proper. Apart from this, nothing much has changed. You're free, as before, to customise your own league and cup competitions with the national and club sides available, and there is the same wide range of formal competitions to take part in.

Club sides can play in the European Superleague - a 38-game slog against the cream of Europe (and Arsenal), and the more or less interchangeable Cupwinners Cup, UEFA Cup (which has two legs throughout) and European Cup. National teams have the European Cup (a massive knockout competition); the "proper" European Championships; and the League of Nations, a 15-team league in which everyone gets to play everyone else once and Germany, Spain or Belgium wins (according to our extensive all-computer teamed Labs Test).

International Sensible Soccer



Then there's the reason for this release - the World Cup. As ever, the teams have been scrupulously researched. The groupings are all correct, and they even play teams from the correct groups in the second stage according to where they finish in the first. In other words, all that nightmarish "the first team in Group A plays third in Group C, D OR E" stuff is adhered to. This is an excellent detail which didn't need to be included, and deserves a pat on the back. There's also none of the nationalistic ignorance that has peppered the commentary of the likes of Alan Parry throughout the World Cup - it's quite possible to win the whole thing with the likes of Nigeria or South Korea.

Sensi - as it became affectionately known - had a wealth of teams. The International version does not differ in this respect.

Teams galore

One of the nicest things about Sensible Soccer has always been the sheer number of teams available to you. The teams have almost been updated throughout (some, like Milan, have the same squad as last time). And it's always worth trawling through the more obscure European club sides in search of a gem with which to humiliate an opponent who's opted for the "name" side. This version has the likes of B Sixty Eight from the Faroe Isles (a

commentator's nightmare, with four Hansens, three Olsens and two Hojgaards); also in there are Zmaltiris Vilnius of Lithuania; Olimpik Ljubljana of Slovenia. (Sadly, there's no Dnepr Dnepropetrovsk, a big office favourite, and once again, disappointingly for football fans the world over, there's no Gillingham. What is it with these people?)

Occasionally, the ratings throw out the odd weird one: in a game where almost all teams have three star players and Benfica has four, Parma has only two - neither of whom is Fausto Asprilla. Like all sports games, you soon find your favourites in any team, and start looking for them to do well in real life - at the moment, for example, I have an abiding affection for Emilio Butragueño, thanks to his hat-trick for Real Madrid in the last five minutes of my European Superleague top-of-the-table clash with Milan. Doubtless it will pass.

Bargain alert

So basically, it's exactly the same game, brought up to date to include the World Cup and with some new club sides thrown in for good measure. The bugs from the original seem to have gone, as has the old slowdown problem during goalmouth action. The good part about it is that owners of the original can return the game disk and get an upgrade for just £9.00. This is a pretty good deal: if you already have the game, upgrading it will breathe new life into it; if you don't have it, it's worth having a look at it. Despite the faults with its speed, it's still one of the best football games around. **8**

78

SCORE

One of the best on the PC, but still not up to the Amiga version.

Minimum Memory: 570K

Minimum Processor: 386

Hard Disk Space Required: 720K

Graphics Modes Supported: EGA, VGA, VGA

Sound Cards Supported: Roland, AdLib, Sound Blaster Pro

Controls: Keyboard, Joystick

Price: £19.99 Release Date: Out Now

Publisher: Renegade Tel: 071 702 3643

League Table

Choosing the game that's right for you is as nightmarish as putting together an international squad. Thankfully, Patrick "Eat Your Heart Out Nick Hornby" McCarthy knows a thing or two about selection issues and imparts his knowledge to the uninitiated.

Arcade Games

World Cup USA '94	78
Sensible Soccer International	78
Sensible Soccer	70
FIFA International Soccer	70
Dino Dini's Goal	60
Empire Soccer	57
Striker	55

Management Games

Championship Manager '94	80
Championship Manager Italia	80
Tactical Manager	75
Championship Manager '93	75
Premier Challenge	65
Premier Manager 2	65
Premier Manager	59
World Cup Challenge	48

Arcade Games



World Cup USA '94

The officially licensed game of the World Cup, it features masses of in-game tweaking options. Also throws in some nice graphics and an extensive team customising option (all you get are fictional national sides). There are problems with the offside rule (which you can thankfully switch off) and one or two problems with headers, bicycle kicks and slide tackles. It also might be just a tad too easy.

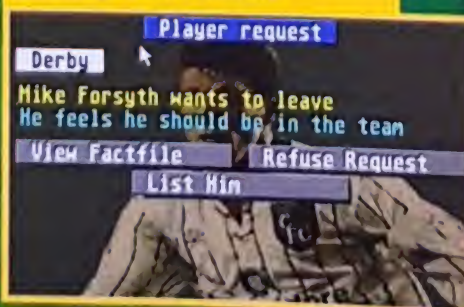
Arcade Games



Empire Soccer

Cartoon-style approach, which makes a change from the pseudo-seriousness of the competition. Features over-the-top "special moves" like Banana Shots and Super Dribble, cameo insets of the players and plenty of gameplay options. Unfortunately, the huge sprites and small playing view restrict the fun, and the scrolling sometimes can't quite keep up with the action.

Management Games



Championship Manager '93

Last year's version of the most addictive football management game around.

Arcade Games



Sensible Soccer International

The bugs have been fixed, the competitions have been updated and the occasional problems with slowdown have disappeared. It's still too fast, it's still (yeah yeah) not as good as the Amiga version, but at least it's more up-to-date than the original, and it's playable.

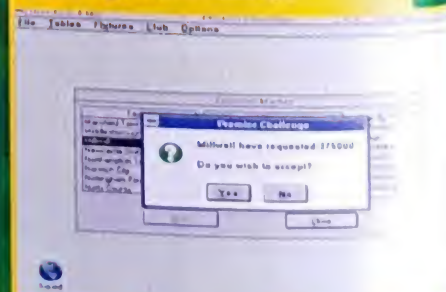
Arcade Games



Striker

Plenty of league and cup options, although all of them are fictitious, as are the national teams featured. Good editing facilities and quite nice-looking sprites don't make up for a pitch that vibrates with a hideous, ungodly light on slower machines. Plays slowly on anything under a 486SX, has that weird "small goal at the top end" effect and unfeasibly sticky ball control.

Management Games



Premier Challenge

The only game designed especially for Windows. It started out as a promising enough idea, with a lot of talk about what was to come in terms of customer involvement, and got a mark that took promises into account. We wait with bated breath to see how it will develop.

Arcade Games



Sensible Soccer

The game that was awaited with a suspense unheralded since Marlon Brando ordered an extra pound of butter with his meal. Far and away the best PC football game at the time, but sadly inadequate compared to the Amiga original. Still, it gave you loads of real-life national and club sides and excellent customising facilities. On the down side, it had one or two bugs and the World Cup games end at the qualifying stages.

Arcade Games



FIFA International Soccer

Despite the wonderful animation and potential for engrossing and involving gameplay, its flaws ensure that games rapidly deteriorate into an endless succession of long shots, turning it into a sort of high-tech Pong.

Arcade Games



Dino Dini's Goal

Playable both vertically and horizontally, this effort by the man who designed *Kick Off* features an irritating zoom view and plenty of editing and difficulty options, but a limited tactical screen with few formations. Unfortunately, it also has sprites that look like they've been in a fight with Edward Scissorhands, white noise for sound effects and the ping-pong ball movement from *Kick Off* (some weirdos used to like this).

Management Games



Championship Manager '94

The updated (to last season) version of the finest football management game yet seen, it features a superb interface, improved playing speed, all four divisions and real players in real teams whose ratings are arguably the most accurate around. It allows you to control any team you like, has a great on-going transfer market and interesting man management opportunities (fine the buggers).

Management Games



Championship Manager Italia

As left, but set in the World of Serie A and B, trillion-pound transfer fees and good-quality raincoats.

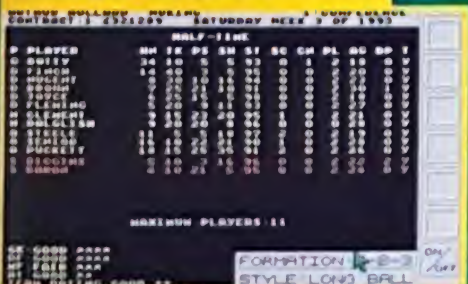
Management Games



Tactical Manager

The first management game to emphasise the pursuit of your own personal fortunes as opposed to that of your team's. Features real teams, but only from the top two English divisions, and you can only start with the lesser lights of Division One. A sort of compromise between *Championship Manager* and *Premier Manager* in approach, looks and quality.

Management Games



Premier Manager

Despite its title, it forces you to take charge of a Vauxhall Conference team and try to win promotion, after which you may be lucky enough to be offered the Hartlepool job. Graphically stunted and with fictitious players, you spend far too much time sorting out advertising boardings. Avoid.

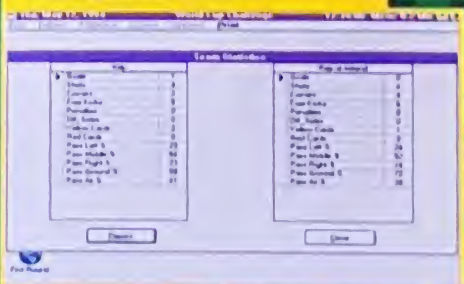
Management Games



Premier Manager 2

Imaginatively-titled follow up to *Premier Manager*, it forces you (again) to start in the Vauxhall Conference and has even more irritating advertisement tinkering to slog through. It does nothing new in the graphics department and actively encourages changing your side and tactics at random - a theory which is strangely at odds with real life.

Management Games



World Cup Challenge

A pointless game. With only seven games to play, and no buying or selling of players, most of the involvement required of a management game simply isn't there. Avoid even more.

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TIE Fighter gives the player an opportunity that is rarely offered in computer games - to be the bad guy. But you can't expect to be a success at rebel bashing if you're fumbling for your keys all the time. That's why **Laurence Scott** has created this template for PC Zone readers.

COMMUNICATIONS		SHIFT & THESE KEYS	
A)	ASSIGN TARGET TO WINGMAN	H)	ORDER TO HEAD HOME
B)	ORDER RESUPPLY (THROTTLE OFF)	I)	WINGMAN IGNORE TARGET
C)	REQUEST COVER FROM WINGMAN	R)	REPORT CURRENT ORDERS
E)	ORDER EVASIVE ACTION	S)	SEND FOR REINFORCEMENTS
G)	CONTINUE WITH MISSION	W)	AWAIT FURTHER ORDERS

GAME CONTROLS		ALT & THESE KEYS	
C)	CALIBRATE JOYSTICK	M)	TOGGLE MUSIC
V)	DISPLAY VERSION	S)	TOGGLE SOUND
D)	ADJUST DETAIL	T)	CHANGE TIME ACCELERATION

RETURN TO COCKPIT FROM EXTERNAL WARHEAD VIEW	CYCLE THROUGH WARHEAD VIEWS	TOGGLE EXTERNAL CAMERA MODE	ENABLE EXTERNAL CAMERA REPOSITING
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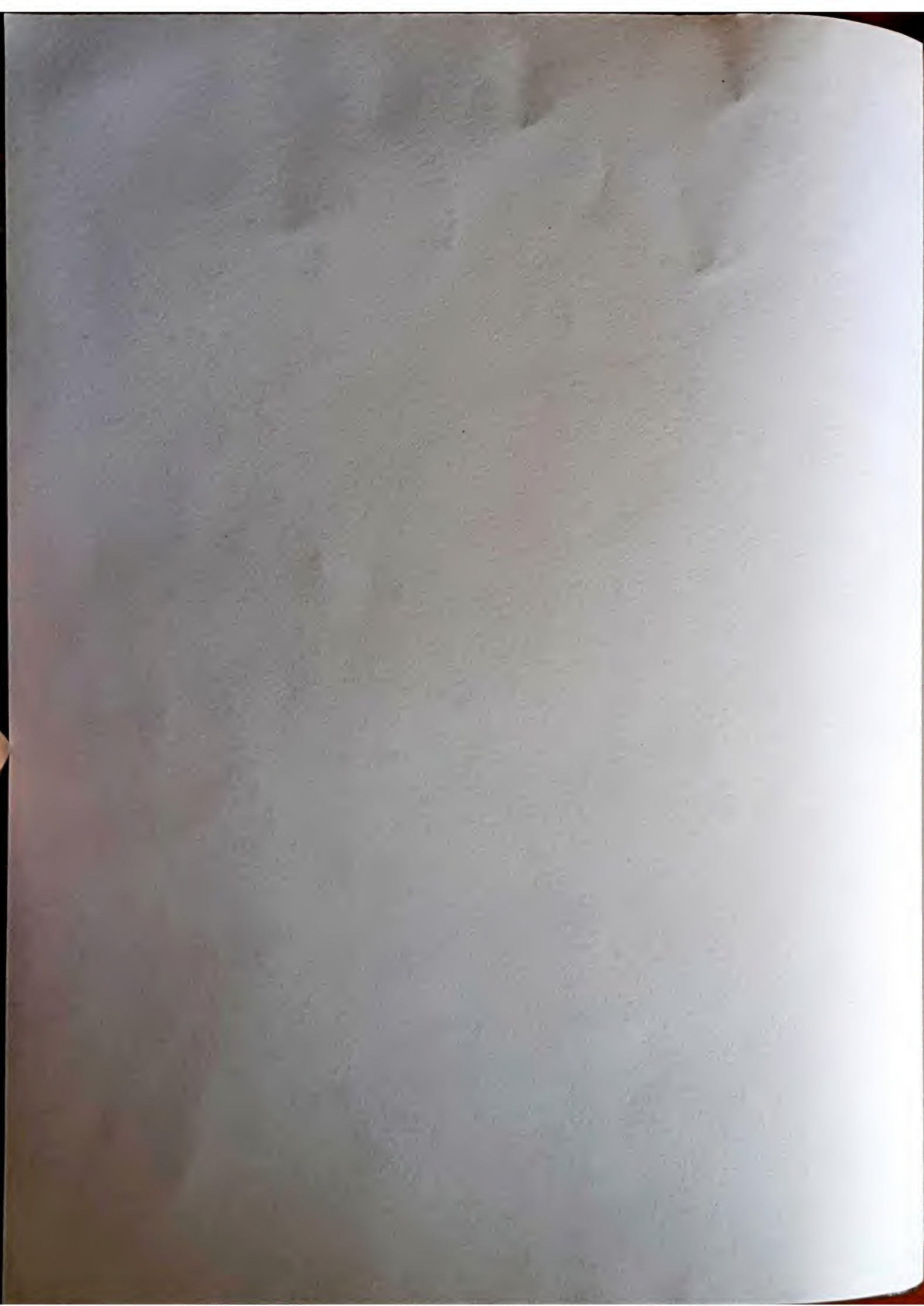
WITH SHIFT: STORE TARGET IN PRESET		ADJUST BEAM WEAPON RECHARGE	
SELECT PRESET TARGET			
PRESET 1	PRESET 2	PRESET 3	

ENERGY FROM SHIELDS TO WEAPONS	ADJUST LASER RECHARGE
ENERGY FROM WEAPONS TO SHIELDS	ADJUST SHIELDS RECHARGE

CALL UP FLIGHT OPTIONS



VIEWS →																				1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		0		-		+		← BACKSPACE THROTTLE TO FULL			
																				LEFT SHOULDER		NEAR VIEW		RIGHT SHOULDER		LEFT WING		STRAIGHT UP		RIGHT WING		LEFT FORWARD		RIGHT FORWARD		FORWARD		RIGHT FORWARD		TOGGLE WING HIGH ANGLE		DECREASE THROTTLE		INCREASE THROTTLE			
																				Q		W		E		R		T		Y		V		I		*		P		[]		ENTER ↵		MATCH SPEED OF TARGET	
																				QUIT		CYCLE WEAPONS		CLOSEST TARGET		CLOSEST ENEMY		SELECT TARGET		PREVIOUS TARGET		NEAREST TARGET		TOGGLE COMPONENT TRACKING		REPOSITION EXTERNAL CAMERA		PAUSE GAME		THROTTLE TO 1/3		THROTTLE TO 2/3					





(Above) The game has an enormous database which should only be braved by the seriously anal.



(Above) Lovely rescalable vector maps which come from real declassified sources.

HARPOON II

Train spotter, coach spotter and Sinclair C5 spotter, **Tim Ponting** now adds sub spotting to his long list of interesting leisure pursuits, with the arrival in the office of the sequel to *Harpoon*.

HARPOON II is a game of straight lines, circles, triangles and boxes. The idea is to make as many of the opposition's red things disappear as possible while hanging on to as many of your own green things as you can. Or at least that's how it seems at first. On selecting a menu option, the "things" turn into pictures. Ships, aircraft, helicopters... So that's what it's all about - a naval warfare simulation.

If your idea of a great simulation game involves fast-moving graphics, seat-of-the-pants action in 20 minute bursts, then stick to flying and driving games. *Harpoon II* is about as slow as realism gets. You're the commander of a naval force - perhaps just a sailor boy with a couple of submarines, or a Rear Admiral in charge of an entire carrier group with land-based air support and several surface task forces. You have a mission to accomplish, which you carry out by issuing instructions to your craft. Courses are plotted, missions set up, patrols allotted, and then you come across the enemy....

Typically, the first 20 minutes of a game of *Harpoon II* is spent with the simulation paused, browsing through the database learning about the kit on board all of your ships, checking out your available air assets and "making a plan". Then, as the game unfolds, you react to the threats which your sensors report. Knowledge of the hardware is the key to winning the engagement, so be prepared - you'll have

your head stuck inside a database for many hours. If you're a naval nuts and bolts fanatic, the database is worth £45 in its own right.

Yaawwwn

If this sounds marginally less interesting than watching paint dry, then there's worse news to come. Not only is the game *Harpoon II* very slow, the program is too. Windows and screen updates struggle to keep up with your cursor and, in complex engagements, the code is swamped by the mass of data. In one scenario I was hunting Russian subs with Swedish Anti-Submarine Warfare craft which drop sonobuoys (little radio-controlled sonar devices that hunt for subs in their vicinity). In scenarios such as this, the screen can literally disappear

(Below) On anything lower than a 486 it's small city.



IN PERSPECTIVE

There is only one other modern naval sim worth contemplating. And it's out on budget now. If you don't have a 486, the basic *Harpoon* package makes more sense.

Harpoon II

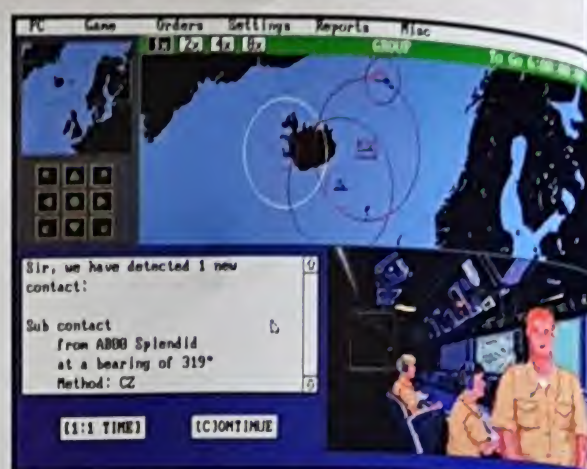
Harpoon

under the carpet of objects, all of which are monitored separately. It's amazing it all works. But no matter how impressed you are, it's still far too slow unless you're running on a top-end 486.

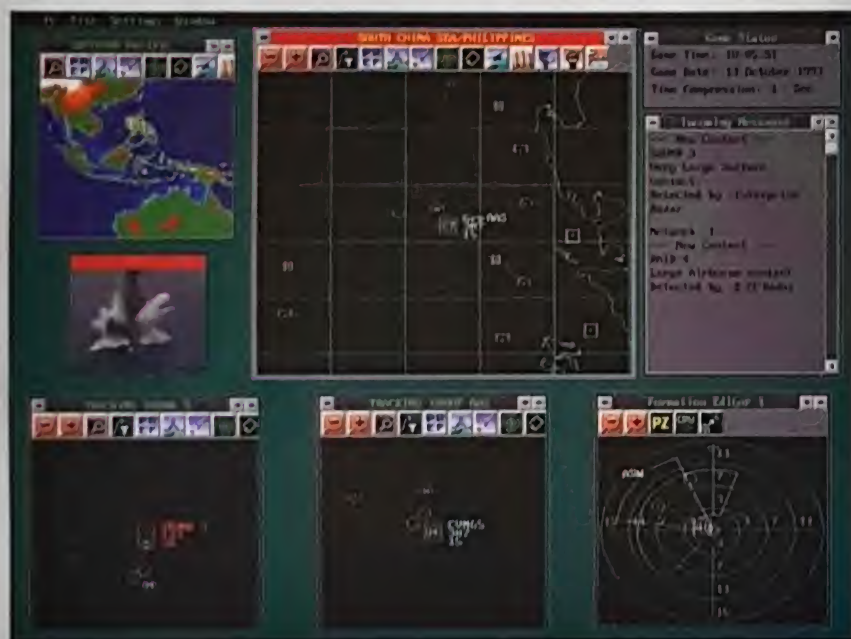
New bits

If you're the other reader out there who played *Harpoon* - hi, I'm Tim, must swap scenarios some time - 360 has spent three years putting some new features into the product. The maps are no longer crappy bitmaps that let you sail ships across Norway and make it impossible to reach your objective without running aground. They are now rescalable vector maps, taken from various declassified but horribly accurate sources that cover the whole world. You have to stay within the geographical confines of the scenario, but you can zoom in and out ad infinitum.

The screen is now in glorious 256 colour VGA, with up to 1024 by 768 resolution if your card can stand it. Various other bits and bobs will appeal to old *Harpooners*. Air-to-air refuelling is now modelled, and you can take on munitions from nearby support ships. The Formation Editor is hugely jazzed up (and very difficult to use - not helped by the manual, which doesn't cover this area very well) and there's a new mission editor at the heart of the game.



(Above) the map in Harpoon II lets you zoom in and out at your leisure, and are rendered in glorious 256-colour VGA. (Left) The first Harpoon still plays well.



This is a key development; for example, you can define a patrol area and units to go in it, which the program will micro-manage for you. Unfortunately, after several days trying to appreciate the AI, I went back to manual course-plotting: almost as quick and twice as effective. It's a great idea, though, and the inclusion of threat zones around which prohibited craft will steer is also a fine development.

The complete text from the manual is available as an on-line help file accessible from the product, and there are also tutorial scenarios and text to help you get started. Very handy for those with five HD disks and no sense of responsibility.

The scenarios

At the end of the day, Harpoon has always stood or fallen on the quality of the scenarios designed for it. Most of the original ones fell prey to the shortcomings of the AI - if you managed air assets properly, you won decisively every time.

Submarine missions were mostly impossible. When new battlesets were released, they were small engagements between interesting platforms, minimising the effects of air power, thus playing to the game's strengths.

Most of the Harpoon II scenarios I've played are humdingers. They vary from a near impossible mission to stop South African rebels from receiving Soviet arms through a quick sharp knife fight off the Israeli coast, to a second Falklands War - a particularly interesting scenario involving two carrier groups, subs and air support. There's even a battle at each end of the English Channel between UK and French naval forces over Britain's refusal to join the European Currency. (I lost it rather badly, as it happens. Never trust a Frenchman with an emu. Or something.)

For sad punters only

Let's face it, you have to be a really sad sim nutter to buy this game. You can't even



SCORE

Massive, embarrassingly serious sim for those who like contemplating their

navals. Superb detail,

occasionally nail-biting, always sloooooow.

(Left) What looks to you and I like a random pattern of meaningless dots is, to some people, an exciting way to spend a Saturday night.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb (8Mb recommended)

Minimum Processor: 386SX (486 recommended)

Hard Disk Space Required: 25Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VESA compatible SVGA card with 512Kb or more

Sound Cards Supported: Sound Blaster or 100% compatible

Controls: Mouse essential

Comments: Yes, it'll run on a 386SX, but life's too short. 486DX essential really. Make sure you don't just have an SVGA card, you must have VESA drivers too.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Electronic Arts **Tel:** 0753 549442

redeem yourself by vectoring 99 aircraft into the same square mile of airspace like you can in Tracoon II, the ultimate in "sad" sims for wannabe air traffic controllers. If you're serious about naval warfare, you can be forgiven. If you loved Harpoon, and you've got an extremely fast PC, you can be forgiven. (Phew, that's me off the hook!) If you haven't got a fast PC, stick to the old version, buy a new battleset or try to find some good public domain scenarios. Anyone else - get a life. ☹



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ON THE BALL

As a pretender to the Bulgarian throne, **Paul Lakin** has been deeply moved by his subjects' success in the World Cup, so when the World Cup version of *On the Ball* arrived in the PC Zone office we knew immediately who we wanted to review it. Unfortunately, Patrick McCarthy was away.

(Below) The internationally renowned coach Mouse Button, celebrates his team's success.



"A more serious disappointment than the lack of real names is the discovery that the game has gone for the 'run' approach."

(Below) "Blimey Jack - That Invisible Man's proved to be a bit of a corker in goal ain't 'e?"



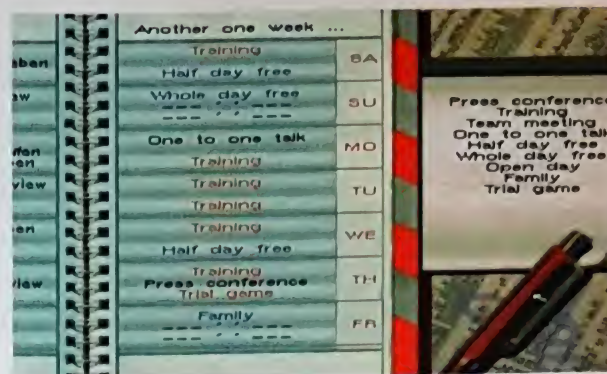
THE Germans are a funny lot when it comes to the World Cup, they always start really slowly before slipping into gear, round about the quarter finals, and going on to win the tournament. (Not this time though, heh, heh, heh.) *On the Ball*, a German management game, takes this lack of speed out of the traps to a ridiculous level. At the time of writing the World Cup is at the semi-final phase, yet the game is still at the beta phase. Not a great start really.

Mind you, World Cup games are always on something of a hiding to nowhere since, as the learned Professor McCarthy is always quick to point out, the competition is so short that the games are bound to be limited. You only get four weeks of football instead of a whole season. And how many

times do you want to win the World Cup anyway? The only real incentive to buy a World Cup management game is to take part in the fever of football's greatest tournament. By the time this one comes out the party will be over and there'll be nothing left except the hangover and a lot of soggy bunting.

All the world's a stage...

One way the game attempts to overcome its problems with size is to incorporate the qualifying rounds as well. This not only adds an extra two years to the game but also, of course, allows you to succeed where G. Taylor failed. Well almost. Where Taylor had Gascoigne, Platt and (unfortunately) Palmer, you have Grubb, Woodruff and Farshty. Yep, it's made up names time - which for me is an immediate turn off especially in a game supposedly recreating



Lord Paul Lakin, football manager extraordinaire shows off his diary - packed full of prestigious social events, as usual.

a real event. I've never really understood why some games have real names and some don't. Is it a copyright thing or just disinterest?

Of course, there's an Editor option which allows you to change players' names and stats. So you can create the proper national side (or at least what you think it should be), but it's a real fag to change the names and stats for all your team only to find them playing against imaginary opposition. You'd have to be quite a fanatic to enter changes for all the national sides, but then game editors do tend to bring out the trainspotter in people.

The editor within *On the Ball* is actually one of its more impressive features, allowing you to change everything from the national seedings to the average attendance at your team's matches. Shame there's not a tactics editor, mind.

A more serious disappointment than the

(Above) Paul's first attempt at a custom formation left a lot to be desired.
(Below) Time to discuss doing adverts for breakfast cereals and signing recording contracts.





lack of real names is the discovery that the game has gone for the "fun" approach. Good God, football's not about fun – it's about pain, suffering and lukewarm Bovril on a damp November afternoon. That's why it'll never catch on in America. But I digress. (You'll go blind you filthy pervert. Ed.) There seem to be two types of management game; serious, tactical games where your



main concerns are the events on the pitch (i.e. *Championship Manager* and *Premier Challenge*), and the soap opera approach – slices of supposed football life where your

stadium burns down every three weeks and your star strikers keep retiring to open pubs (*Premier Manager* and... er... *Premier Manager 2*). The style you prefer probably depends on whether you're more interested in the effect Eric Cantona has had on Manchester United's playing style or the real reason he left Leeds.

On the Ball has plumped roundly (pretty neat, heh?) for the latter approach and that, to me, is a mistake. Call me a misanthropic old bastard if you like (after all, everyone else does) but, by the time the newspaper cuttings had started burbling on about aliens tuning into the World Cup and Nessie appearing in America, I was having a serious sense of humour failure.

...And all those in it players

On with the game. Before making your team or squad selections you'll want to make a careful study of the available players. There's a pool of about 40 to choose from. Each player is rated for both his ability and his form. Ability rarely changes, form can fluctuate wildly – and usually does. Certain players also have special

(Above) The scene just after Lakin has been handing out the used tenners.

The Training Ground

This is where you work on your players' fitness and fine tune those cunning little moves in hope of that one day you'll be able to say in a post-match interview "Oh that was something we've been working on in training". During the qualification stages, training sessions are, in fact, three-day get togethers with the chance to practice something different each day. England managers should ignore this option since they, of course, only ever meet the players on the day of the match – assuming any of the team made it through the previous Saturday without career shattering injuries.

If you do arrange a get together then you can choose what you want your team to work on each day (i.e. set pieces, heading, offside-trap etc.) During the sessions themselves, there's an animation of the team in action plus a commentary telling you who's performing

wonders and who's nipped behind the bike sheds for a quick tag. As a consequence of these observations, players may gain or lose form points. The problem is that there doesn't seem to be any kind of consistency. For example, a player may be brilliant in one training session and then hopeless in the next. Everyone has their off

days, sure, but this sort of inconsistency is usually reserved for the third division.

Once you get to the States there are whole weeks of preparation. Instead of a churned up field with a battered scout hut in the corner, you now have a training camp where you can work on an even wider range of skills – though this being the World Cup you may just want to stick to practising your penalty taking.

The worst thing about the training is the tone of the commentary, which is wearily heavy handed. Every now and again there's a description of one player kicking the ball into another's face, followed by a description of the interplay of their emotions that wouldn't be out of place in stage directions. "Aha," you think the first time it happens "Munro and White nearly came to blows, I'd best not play them at the same time."

"Oh Christ," you think, the 300th time it happens, "not the old ball in the face routine again. I'm going down the pub."



(Right) EXCLUSIVE:
Graham Taylor's wet
dream - first picture!

The Locker Room

During an actual game your contributions are limited to making substitutions and tweaking the playing style. (Basically, if you're two goals down with five minutes to go you swap to "Go for broke" and "Play Brutal".) However, your big moment comes at half-time. Here you get the chance to put into practice all those management skills you learnt at Night School. You can encourage the team, try to appeal to their better natures or simply give them a good old bollocking. You can also praise or criticise individual players. Unfortunately, the amount of information you get during the course of a match is so scant that this becomes a lottery. During one half-time break, I gave my midfield player a right earful, only to be told that he was rather hurt because he'd been playing quite well - so how come we hadn't made a single attack in the half and his name hadn't appeared in the commentary then?

Conversely, having heaped praise on my winger, I was told that he'd had an indifferent half and the rest of the team "Wondered what I'd noticed". Well I'd noticed him walking through the opposition's defence seemingly at will, setting up two goals and scoring one. In my day that sort of thing was regarded as being quite good, but perhaps I'm just too old fashioned.

In America, your role as a personnel officer becomes even more demanding - since you have to deal with players who are upset about not getting a game. The tactful manager heads this sort of thing off at the pass by having a quiet chat (chap to chap) with a player before dropping him from the team and ending his international career. These meetings take place in your hotel bedroom, which seems a bit odd to me. Perhaps it's not. Personnel work has changed a lot since my day.



abilities (or inabilities) at such fine arts as ball control, heading and the winning of 50/50 balls. These skills are denoted by a graphic that is so small that anyone with less than 20/20 vision is left muttering "Is that a banana shot or a flash of lightning?"

As well as skills, players have actually been given personalities (oh they want everything these young players... in my day personality was something for the toffs, the likes of us were happy to be a bunch of "salt of the earth"

stereotypes). This is becoming a feature of every management game, forcing you to blend

characters as well as abilities. I've always been a tad sceptical about how effective these features are. Do they produce results based on carefully constructed algorithms or is it all pretty random? Answers on a postcard please. In fact, my gripe with *On the Ball* is slightly different. In terms of commitment, the potential England squad range from "not bothered" to "couldn't give a piss". The best I could muster was a defender who was mildly interested in winning, provided it wasn't too cold and there was nothing good on TV - an attitude which in my team made him a fire-spitting hot head. Now, I'm fully aware that England teams do tend to be a bit lacking in the skills department but, last summer's aberrations apart, surely commitment has always been their strong point: the refusal to give up despite being eight goals down and playing like a doped race horse. If I'd wanted a team of



(Above) The cunningly programmed bullshit screen.

sleep-walkers I'd have picked Russia.

Patience is a virtue (but, sadly, it's not one of mine)

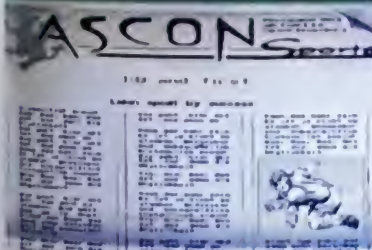
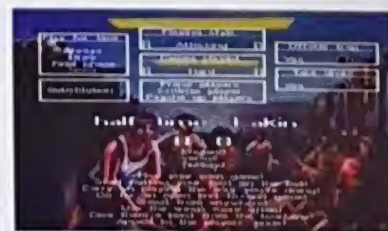
As well as giving the game more body by including the qualification rounds, Ascon has also done some padding in the build-up department. It can take ages to get to a game. During the two-year qualification, you get to plan your activity for every week. This isn't quite as mind numbing as it

sounds since you are limited to watching other games, holding a three-day training get-together and playing a friendly. Oh... you have to play your qualification matches as well, of course.

The idea of watching other games is to give you some insight into how your future opponents are going to play. The more games you watch, the more likely it is that your information on their team selection

(Below) It's not looking good at half-time as Lord Paul contemplates coming to a sticky end in a South American bar.

(Bottom) The manager celebrates his first win with a trip to Ikea.



REVIEW On The Ball



(Left) Uncanny how Ascon got this portrait spot on: Lakin ponders on the loneliness of command.

will be accurate. Mind you, most of the information from these games is bland in the extreme. If you were expecting comments like "Watch the big number 7, he tends to ghost into the box at set pieces", you're going to be disappointed. Apart from their formation all I ever managed to learn was that the team was playing pretty much the same way as last time, and that I'd gained real understanding of their tactics. Which, quite frankly, was news to me....

The training get togethers are another of the good-in-theory-quite-irritating-in-practice elements of the game. These can be arranged anytime during your qualification, though clubs are not always willing to release their players. In practice (ho ho) you can arrange about five get togethers during the two years.

The play's the thing

Eventually, after wading your way through some not very funny newspaper headlines and a couple of training sessions, you get to the match itself. The key moment. Will the game justify all its senseless meanderings by producing a stunner of a match system, or will this be as shallow as the rest of the game? The suspense is unbearable. (Well, it isn't really, but I do like to add a bit of tension to these things.)

The team and tactic selection is reasonable enough. It's easy to use and even lets you know when a player is out of position. However, you're limited to six possible formations, so anyone wanting to indulge in El Tel's Christmas tree tactic is going to be disappointed. There's no chance to design your own formations.

Additional tactics range from the obvious (use the wings), to the interesting (play the off-side trap) to the frankly childish (take a dive). You may also select your team's level of aggression and whether they're playing an attacking or defensive game. Then it's into the match, one of *On the Ball's* strengths and weaknesses.


On the positive side, the animated highlights are often quite good, occasionally reminiscent of that German masterpiece, *The Manager*. On the negative side, the running commentary is both irritating and useless. It's irritating because of its heavy-handed attempts at parodying football clichés and because of its inconsistencies. My line up in one match was described as an interesting blend of experience and new blood. In the next game I was criticised for picking a bunch of unknowns, which was strange since it was exactly the same team as before.

Worse still, the commentary is just about the only way of telling how the team and its individual members are performing. It's not really a lot to go on and makes team selection a bit of a joke. Though in that case I suppose it's a fair representation of England's World Cup (non) qualification.

United Mistakes of America

Should you ever reach the World Cup tournament itself, you're basically in for more of the same. Training is more luxurious, you're responsible for the day to day itinerary of the team (including planning rest days) and there's a medical centre for you to check out. However, broadly speaking, it's just the qualifying round with added window dressing.

That's what a lot of *On the Ball* is - window dressing. It has some good ideas (such as the training sessions, offside tactics and some of the highlights) but a lot of it is simply irritating (such as press conferences, stupid newspaper headlines and some of the commentaries). There are also some parts that are simply wrong. I know there's been talk of internationals moving away from Wembley, but would England really play a World Cup qualifier at Wimbledon's ground or "A stadium in Norfolk"?

If you're looking for a cheerful, fairly easy World Cup memento, then *On the Ball* might be okay for you. However, if you're looking for an in-depth and realistic football management game, look elsewhere. 

Oh dear - looks like our man is about to set off one of those sex, drugs and football scandals.

IN PERSPECTIVE

It's probably unfair to compare *On the Ball* to non-World Cup management games since the World Cup throws up its own problems. Unfortunately, I haven't played any other World Cup management games - besides, when was I ever fair?

Championship Manager

Premier Challenge

Premier Manager 2

On The Ball



68

SCORE

Too many frills, not enough body.

Minimum Memory: 3.5Mb

Minimum Processor: 386

Hard Disk Space Required: 12Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA, SVGA

Sound Cards Supported: Sound Blaster, AdLib

Controls: Keyboard, mouse

Price: £34.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Ascon Tel: 071 328 2762



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D-DAY

With the Normandy sand still between his toes, **Andrew Wright** looks at Impressions' attempt at recreating The Longest Day.



ON THE basis that the whole world and his dog must have heard of D-Day and the Normandy landings by now, I'll spare you the quick recap. Impressions'

latest war game, however, recreates more than just the 6th June 1944; it actually attempts to simulate the whole of the last year of the war, from the beaches and hedgerows of Normandy to the Battle of



(Below) "The Beginning of the End." An appropriate title for a war game that is likely to be just that.

reference card, all neatly packaged and presented. The first booklet is a well-written overview of Operation Overlord, the original military code name for the Normandy landings. Next come two game manuals, one covering the miniature level and the other the strategic level. Just bog standard manuals to you and me, but Impressions give them the rather grand title of *Operations Handbooks*. Finally, there is a technical supplement and a



Herman returns from the Ann Summers party clutching his new toy "This should bring the sparkle back to Eva's eye."



the Bulge and the crossing of the Rhine, using the system first devised for *The Blue and the Gray*, an American Civil War game.

Within that framework, the world is your oyster. Apart from the sizeable chunk the Germans have grabbed, of course. You can land in the Pas de Calais, where the Germans were expecting the invasion to come, or you can take the historical route and kick off on Omaha, Utah, Gold, Juno and Sword. Three strict historical scenarios are provided too, covering the landings themselves, the breakout from Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge.

With *D-Day* you get no less than four booklets and a quick

August 15, 1944: Operation DRUGKIN

The Allied landings in the south of France, code named DRUGKIN, originally but changed to DRUGKIN for security reasons later on, began on August 15. Winston Churchill opposed the plan, preferring instead a wholesale strike through Italy into Austria, but Eisenhower was still trying to take a major French port intact and hoped that a strike in the weakly-defended south would supply his needs.

The chosen attack site was a forty-five mile long stretch of beach on the French Riviera, near the town of St. Tropez. The commanders used every hard lesson learned at the Normandy beaches, and that, coupled with the poor quality of the German troops in the area and the excellent weather, resulted in a near textbook-perfect operation with very light casualties. Hitler made no attempt to maintain his hold on Southern France, and ordered a withdrawal



(Above) The best way to view a German Panther, apart from a good ten miles away through your binoculars.

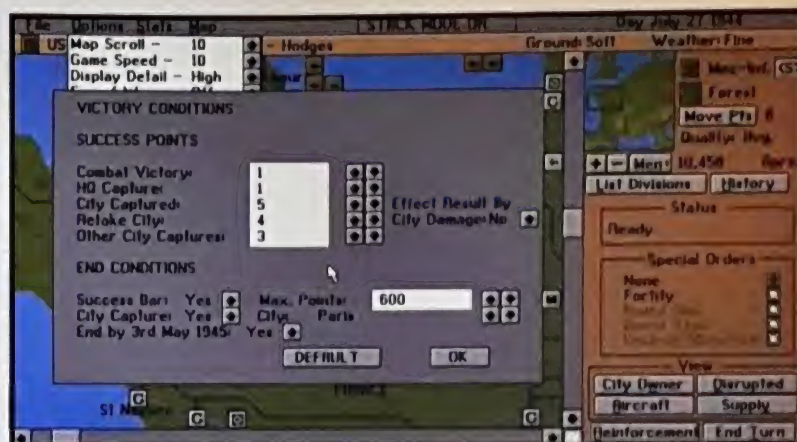
reasonably in-depth tutorial, taking you through the first few moves of a typical game. The manuals would just about qualify as average but for the fact that there are no indexes or decent contents pages. Consequently it's very difficult to

find out anything without wading through dozens of pages first.

The quick reference card is sorely needed in this game, at least to start with, as there are no less than 16 different unit types in the campaign game. It's a shame the keyboard shortcuts weren't also included on the card, as I suspect many game players would rather use them than the mouse.

The game comes on a single disk and takes very little time to install. Once the

FINAL POSITION		
ALLIED TOTALS		
Infantry	Active	Lost
<Units>	34,211	2,309
Armor	98	2
<Units>	195	0
Artillery	15	0
<Units>	0	0
	0	0
GERMAN TOTALS		
Infantry	Active	Lost
<Units>	4,318	4,832
Armor	16	9
<Units>	0	0
Artillery	0	0
<Units>	0	9
	0	1
THE ALLIES WIN		
FINISHED		



relevant files are on the hard disk, all you need to do is set up the sound options for your card, although as this comprises of a dozen or so sound effects, ranging from shellfire to tank engines, you can take it or leave it. Thankfully, there's no lumbering, animated intro so you can launch straight into the game. The game interface is more or else the same as that in *The Blue and the Gray*, with a few minor changes here and there, although it is a big improvement on the likes of earlier Impressions games, such as *The Charge of the Light Brigade*.

D-Day is split into two aspects: the campaign part, where you move large-sized division units on a map of Europe, and the micro miniatures games where the battles are fought out with animated units on a smaller battlefield made up of representative terrain.

The campaign game includes infantry, armour and artillery divisions (including mechanised and paratroop divisions) as well as air support units, such as fighter bombers, bombers and night fighters, battleships, transports, trains, engineers and paratroops. Having artillery organised in divisions is odd to say the least, especially as they can move and fight like any other. The situation is further confused by the fact that the artillery, armour and



(Above top) The game can be made almost infinitely harder (or easier) by varying the victory conditions. (Above) Stacked units are easily accessed - but God knows why the Infantry, armour and artillery units all have the same names.

infantry elements starting in each square share the same name.

On the positive side, there are dozens of configuration options available, from the Fog of War to rules about supply, building fortifications, building up new divisions from reinforcements and travel by rail. Each unit can adopt and reflect the historical personality of its leader, so if you put Patton in charge of an armoured division, it can really go places.

Unfortunately, none of this counts for much as the basic mechanism of the game is all wrong. The struggle for Europe inevitably becomes a counter on counter sloggish match as the scale is just too large to work properly. Getting ashore on June 6th is dead easy and takes about as much

IN PERSPECTIVE

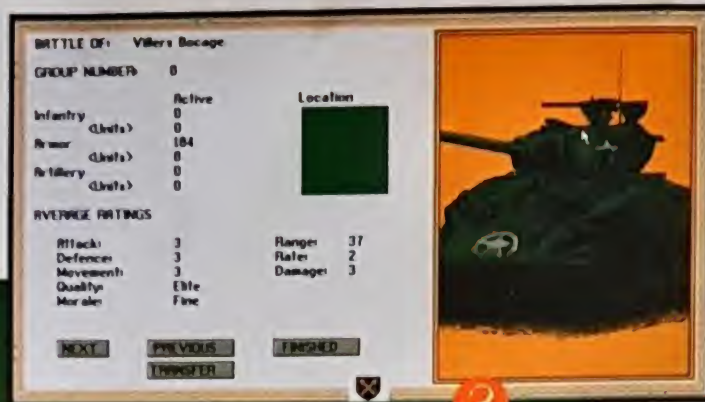
If you really want computer animated war games miniatures, see a psychiatrist. Alternatively, get *Fields of Glory* instead.

Fields of Glory

The Blue and The Gray

D-Day

I am finding myself wondering as to why my dear, loyal Eva has recently acquired a twinkle in her pure Arian eye... and that funny walk..."



Operations Overview

- 1 The overview feature shows the entire battlefield and each unit as a small square. By pressing Play you can even watch the two sides moving and fighting.
- 2 Click here for full details of the currently selected unit.
- 3 Units are grouped together for convenience. This button lets you cycle through the various groups.
- 4 Pressing one of the buttons will display the relevant rating above each of your own units. "A" is for attack, "R" for range, "G" for Group, "D" for Defence, "R" (again) for rate of fire, the second M for morale, "D" for damage and the third M for the number of men in each piece. I can't help thinking that icons might have been handier....
- 5 Units and groups of units can be instructed to hold their fire (HOLD), engage the nearest target within the unit's facing (TARGET) or anything that moves (AT WILL). The Engage options relate to hand-to-hand combat.
- 6 The first formation option shows how the group of units will be placed on the battlefield, the second option shows the type of formation (ranging from double-close order line to single skirmish line and a tight perimeter square), and the third shows the actual way each individual unit is facing.
- 7 Hit Autoplay when you get bored and the computer decides the outcome for you. There's no appeal though....
- 8 Depending on the mode you are in, you can instruct individual units, groups or your whole army at once.

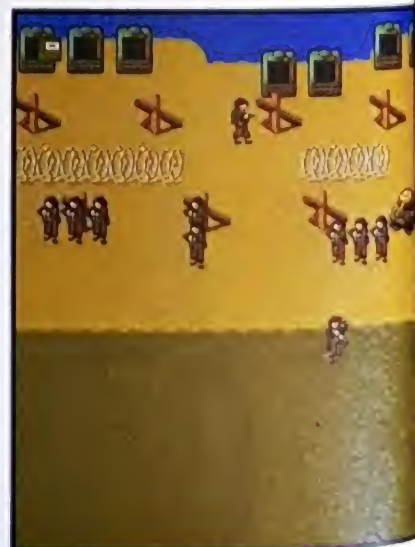
skill as stepping out of a boat. Dragging one bunch of counters onto another isn't my idea of a great game and the campaign element leaves me cold. If you find a gap in the

line, you can soon break out and encircle a few German divisions, but it's all too easy. If you up the difficulty level, it becomes a good deal harder, but it still ain't nowhere near being fun.

In the micro miniatures part - which you can skip if you want to, leaving the computer to decide the outcome of every battle - you get a battlefield of 80 by 80 squares which reflects the regional terrain. In Normandy you get beaches and bocage, and in the Ardennes you get hills and trees. If the battle takes place around a city, town or a village, you get houses and even

DIVISION DETAIL

6th Para Division, 2nd BR Army
 Army Commander: Dempsey
 Division Type: Paratrooper
 Men (Approx.): 4,946
 Quality: Very Good
 Weapons: Lee Enfield, Sten SubMG, .30.50 MG
 Map Location (X,Y): 22, 35
 Orders: None
 Status: Has Fought!





streets. Little imagination has been used and it tends to stick rigidly to the grid – even the shellholes appear in neat rows.

Even sillier is the mathematics of scaling the number of figures to the numbers actually being committed. The maximum number of figures is 125 on the bigger side, 100 infantry, 15 armour and 10 artillery. Thus, if you start with 30,000 men, each soldier figure represents 300 of them. This is quite acceptable for Napoleonic/Civil War

(Above) Landing ashore is a doddle compared to when your lads go inland where things get pretty lffy.

style war games but not for World War II. No way. That funny little chap hiding behind the tree represents 300 blokes in a wood, while the half dozen figures engaged in hand-to-hand combat on the top of the hill represent slaughter on a scale not seen since the Somme.

The action of the game works reasonably well, though sometimes the figures tend to point the wrong way for no apparent reason. Dead figures are left as corpses but so are artillery and tanks, which is just plain sloppy – often I could have done with information on where my tanks met their end. The window scrolling system is chronic too – the slider bars work very jerkily in the stupidest way imaginable. Perhaps the worst criticism is the lack of control you have over your units. Infantry figures can have different weapons, such as heavy machine guns and mortars, as well as rifles and submachine guns, but in the heat of battle, there's no way of seeing at a glance which figure is armed with what. It isn't hard to find yourself doing stupid things, like storming a hill with your mortar team.

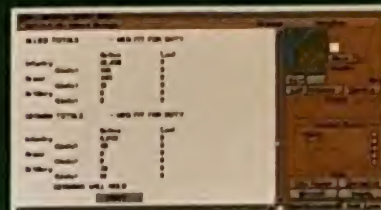
The interface is pretty ponderous and some of the information screens seem to take an age to appear, making it hard to get information quickly. By the time you get it, you've already forgotten why you wanted it. D-Day also has its fair share of little bugs with occasional garbled screen displays and the odd hang, particularly in the Battle of the Bulge scenario.

Unfortunately, D-Day takes what has already proved to be a good miniature war game simulation system and then bloody well ruins it by applying it to the wrong era. If you design a war game system for the musket and shot era, when men were men and they did it in ranks, it's pretty hard to apply it sensibly to World War II when men skulked around hedgerows, stuck twigs in their helmets and chain smoked Lucky Strikes. No doubt the big idea was to cash in on the 50th anniversary of the Normandy landings, but with all those spectacular Marlburian and Napoleonic battles out there just waiting to be refought, World War II was the wrong choice. ☒



Setting Up Units

Once battle is joined, you're treated to a kind of pre-match analysis, happily without Jimmy Hill. This is the moment of truth as you never know enough about



the enemy forces, especially with the Fog of War option turned on. Either you mentally pat your staff officer on the back and trot out to the officers' club for a gin and tonic, or you kick him in the arse and look around for something to plug the hole that's going to appear in your front line in a few minutes time.

The computer places your men onto the battlefield in parade ground formations, and it's up to you to deploy them as you see fit. Units are selected using the right mouse button.



Next, you can change the type of formation and facing using the controls on the right and click on the new location on the map. Finally, a click on the Move Pieces button puts them where you want them. Well, sometimes. The set up routines are a bit erratic and quite often you have to change a formation back again and redo the instruction before you get what you want.

40

SCORE

A sluggish, unrealistic and bug-ridden attempt at a war game without many redeeming features.

Minimum Memory: 640K

Minimum Processor: 286 386 Recommended

Hard Disk Space Required: 4Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: PC speaker,

AdLib/Gold, Sound Blaster/Pro, Roland

Sound Blaster

Controls: Mouse essential

Price: £39.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Impressions Tel: 071 351 2133

(Middle left) Divisions can be renamed, joined together or split up, but exactly what this geezer's got to do with it is anyone's guess.

(Bottom left) The lads wade ashore against what can only be described as light opposition.

SOCCER KID

To give him a well deserved break from the thousands of football games he's been reviewing lately, we decided to give **Patrick McCarthy** a platform game.



(Right) Mum, where's me tea? I'm bored of all this poncing about.



(Left) Bog off you little runt before I set my Bull Mastiff on you.

(Right) Oh no! Here comes that Mastiff!



is, sadly, more a test of your patience than anything else.

The main problem lies in the sheer banality of it all. There's nothing here that hasn't been done elsewhere; every detail of the game is just another tired old platform game cliché - bridges that collapse as you walk across them; spikes that rise from the ground; tunnels to drop into and lumps of turf that hang in mid-air with no visible means of support. If you've seen any console or PC platform game in the last three years, you've seen this. If it made more inventive use of the ball skills the character's been invested with, it might have had something. As it is, it's repetitive and boring. **B**

M

ET Soccer Kid, an irresponsibly-named kid who likes soccer. It could have gone either way really, couldn't it? Let's face it, growing up with that name, any child would be forgiven for developing an obsessive interest in tap-dancing and suffering from occasional blackouts, during which he raced into a sports shop and went berserk with a Swiss Army knife in the football department.

Fat head

Obviously, this particular Soccer Kid is made of sterner stuff, because rather than being cowed by his name, he dresses entirely in gaudy nylon and carries a football with him wherever he goes. This mental strength is reflected in the size of his head, which at approximately seven feet in circumference, would have most steroid-pumped powerlifters weeping with the effort of staying upright. Presumably there's some kind of gyroscope arrangement in there to help him retain his balance.

Plotty time

Anyway, this is a platform game, so obviously there's a preposterous plot to fit

the game around the title: in this case it involves the theft of the World Cup by an alien who collects trophies, its subsequent shattering and dispersal in five countries, and the pursuit and return of said segments by the eponymous main character. This is solidly grounded in reality by the standards of the majority of platform game plots.

Starting in England, you progress through Italy, Russia, Japan and the USA, jumping gaps, whacking baddies and collecting the "soccer cards" that allow you to try to capture the section of the World Cup at the end of each level.

Ball skills

The main character has a good variety of things to do with the ball. He can juggle it on his feet or head, volley it at enemies and perform back-heels, bicycle kicks

and even catch it on his head. And it's intrinsic to the game: the more complicated the move you use to take someone out, the more points you get for doing so. The trouble is, after you've played through the first couple of sub-levels, you'll be so bored you won't want to bother with any of the fancy stuff - you'll just want the enemy out of the way. Their movements are predictable and identical, and killing them

"Presumably there's some kind of gyroscope arrangement in there to help him retain his balance."



SCORE

If you want happening platform action, then buy something else.

Minimum Memory: 580K (2Mb XMS required)

Minimum Processor: 386

Hard Disk Space Required: 14Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

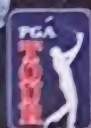
Sound Cards Supported: Sound Blaster, Sound Blaster Pro

Price: £29.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Krisalis **Tel:** 0709 372290

JOIN THE SQUAD... PLAY THE PC HITS

PGA TOUR GOLF



ELECTRONIC ARTS

By Sterling Silver Software

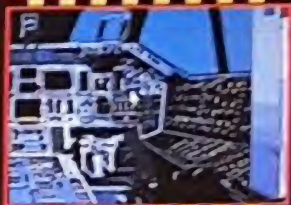
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REACH FOR THE SKIES



SHUTTLE



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With the aid of Mission Control, you will master such challenges as deploying and repairing satellites, launching spy satellites, manoeuvring your craft in zero gravity, attaining the correct re-entry trajectory and pulling off complicated landings.

"Incredibly detailed... in a class of its own" - PC REVIEW

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REACH FOR THE SKIES



THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN.

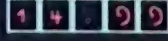
Summer 1940. The future of World War II hangs in the balance. The cream of the German Luftwaffe and the aces of the RAF are locking horns in their most crucial confrontation yet - The Battle of Britain.

Over 50 years on, you have the chance to re-live that famous battle and play the part of a British pilot or a German flying ace. Your performance determines whether the outcome is a repeat of the British victory or an unprecedented German success.

* Re-live the crucial days of the battle as controller, pilot or gunner.

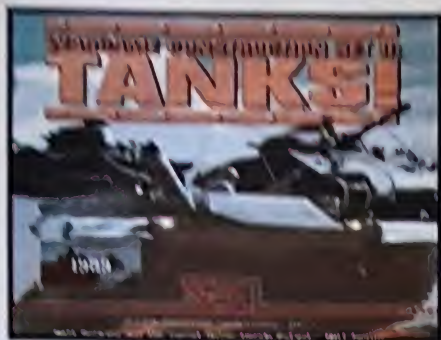
"the combat is exhilarating" - PC REVIEW

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REVIEW

Wargame Construction Set 2: Tanks



WARGAME SET 2: TANKS

SSI's latest isn't too far off being its greatest. **Andrew Wright** gets back to some real old-fashioned wargaming.

(Above) TANKS! - loads of the bloody things. You can choose from one of the 22 already created scenarios or simply ask the computer to create a random one.



Hedgehogs beware!

CONSTRUCTION



(Above left) A Gulf War scenario - the Iraqis don't half disappear quick when the US air strikes appear. (Above right) You can get an instant summary of your formations.

standard and advanced spotting rules (with the standard rules you can see all the enemy units, in the advanced game you can't), command rules and ammo resupply rules. The computer opponent can be weak, moderate or strong.

There are 13 different time periods available - from France in 1918 through various phases of the Second World War, Korea, the two Middle Eastern wars and the Gulf War. There's also a "tomorrow time period" for "what if" scenarios based on the breakup of the Soviet Union. No less than 22 pre-planned scenarios have been added, each of varying size and complexity and covering most of the periods available.

Anyone for DIY?

On top of that, and perhaps TANKS' best feature of all, is the Scenario Editor. You can take forces from any of the periods mentioned, made up to your own specifications from the list of over 1300 units, place them on a map you've designed yourself and even decide on the scenario objectives and tell the computer player how to plan his attack or defence.

The power this gives you to create your

wargame for squad and platoon-sized units in most 20th century conflicts since the start of the First World War. Although the accent is really on armoured warfare (let's face it, the name TANKS! was a pretty strong clue), the game covers the whole gamut of ground combat, including mortars and field artillery, assault guns, tank destroyers, armoured cars, recon vehicles and the poor bloody infantrymen in various guises from engineers to rifle squads and even horses, bicycles and helicopters, depending on the scenario.

Each unit represents between one and seven vehicles or a squad of men, and each hex, of which you can see a rectangle of 12 by 14 hexes at any one time, represents 250m. There's a battlefield overview if you desire it and the game's superbly thought out controls are a mouse fetishist's delight. Various rule options are available, with

(Below) The comparison table is useful when debating whether to pitch a particular unit against another.



YOU CAN'T get too much of a good thing. Now and again I seem to get side-tracked with animated miniatures or even worse, pseudo-multimedia

offerings that are all two-inch square video clips, blaring sound tracks and not much else. It's a real joy to get down to some good old-fashioned wargaming. You know what I mean. Real hexes, nice precise rules so you know what you're doing and, yes you've guessed it, units that look like cardboard counters. Oh, what a joy!

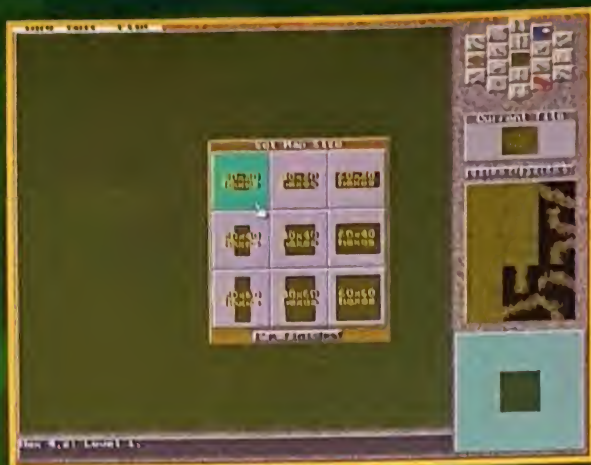
So what exactly am I ranting about? SSI's latest, of course, the Wargame Construction Set 2. If you're an ancient has-been like me, you'll probably remember SSI's original. The first Wargame Construction Set was, well, crap. Even by yesterday's standards. Not so, version 2, though - it's from a different mould. Not only does it have state of the art graphics and sound effects, but it has that elusive quality that so many game publishers seem to miss, that little thing called rivetting gameplay.

As the Wargame Construction Set 2 is subtitled TANKS!, I'll call it that from now on. First of all, TANKS! tells you more about the style of the game and secondly, although I get paid per word, it doesn't do to push your luck too much. Anyway, the game comes in the usual SSI box on two disks and is accompanied by a manual stretching to around 100 pages. A good half of these pages seem to be given over to unit capabilities, tank specs and that sort of thing, and once you've got down to the nitty gritty, it's easy reading.

What we have here is a tactical level

Tank That!

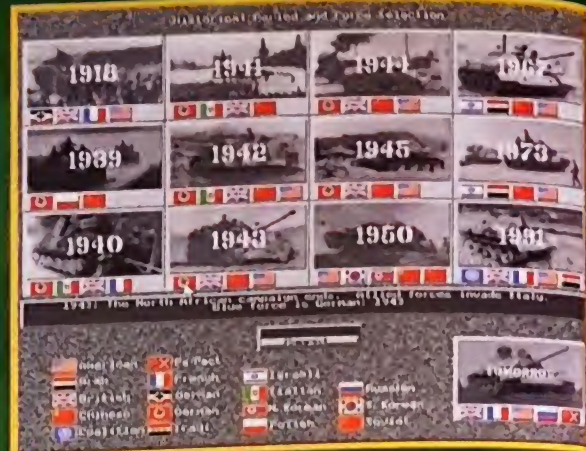
Designing a scenario in *TANKS!* is as hard or as easy as you want to make it. You can design your own map and add random forces or vice versa, tweaking the details as much as you like before you decide it's ready to play.



The first step is to design a battlefield. You can start with a blank map in one of nine sizes, from 20 hexes by 20 to 80 by 80, and add "tiles" to build up the terrain. You've got 230 of them to choose from, ranging from dirt tracks, roads, rivers, lakes, light and dense woods, fields, ridges, escarpments, marshes, two altitude levels, depressions, forts, built-up areas, minefields and abatis. Some tiles are transparent so you can have combinations of terrain in one hex – a river and wood on level 2, for example. Each terrain type affects unit line of sight, cover and movement.



Once you've got your forces together, it's time to put them in their start positions. This will reflect the kind of scenario you envisage, but you can also let the computer do it all for you if you like. Each formation is given an objective (unless ordered to Hunt, in which case it will seek Contact and Fight) and one main objective is added that will gain the attacking side some victory points (the number of which you can specify). Support orders are mainly for artillery and other indirect fire units.



Next comes the time period. It is possible to pit 1990s US forces against 1950s Chinese and North Korean troops, but apart from revenge it's hard to see why. However, it is possible to select 1942 German forces against 1941 Russians for example.



The battle is under way. The American units are relatively light and the Yank tank destroyers don't stand much chance against the heavily armoured Elephants and Tigers. On the other hand, there is plenty of 155mm howitzer support and the Infantry will have a good chance of ambushing the armour as it comes through the gap. Those Jerry tanks look pretty damned close to the flag though, and the American lorry unit, the only one nearby, is bugging out with some antitank guns.



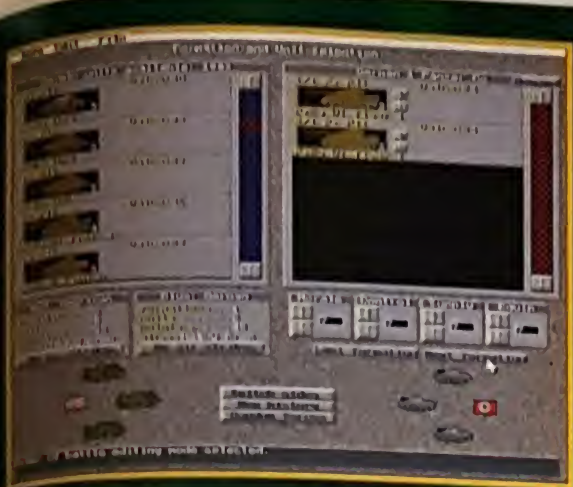
(Above) The centre button in the control panel gives a view of the entire battlefield.

own style of wargames is almost limitless. Fancy a small unit action on a compact, obstacle-strewn map just 20 hexes square? Or a regimental-sized game with 100 units a side covering a map 80 hexes in each direction? Given that you can also choose from either desert/arid, temperate and frozen conditions, day and night scenarios, different weather rules and various levels of air support, *TANKS!* is pretty impressive in the DIV department. Even if you're totally lacking in creativity, you can simply ask the computer to do it for you – pick a time and a place and off you go.

This is the kind of flexibility that has been lacking for far too long in computer wargames. Board and hex wargames offer untold opportunities for designing your own scenarios, but it isn't something that has found its way into the computer side of the hobby with any success. The reason is largely, I suspect, that it has proved far too hard to generate random scenarios which the computer can play anything like intelligently. *TANKS!* appears to have no such problems. Even if you do find an opponent behaving oddly in one of your custom scenarios, you can alter each unit's own

Wargame Construction Set 2: Tanks

REVIEW



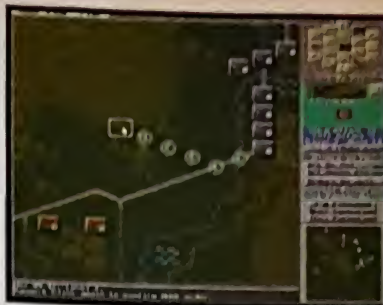
Now comes the fun bit – choosing your forces. I'm not going to pontificate on the merits of combining artillery, infantry and armour in equal proportions. That's boring. My favourite scenario at the moment is the "How many Shermans does it take to kill a Tiger?" The historical answer was four, which must have been soul-destroying for the three crews that didn't make it. Anyway, I digress. You can set the morale, control, ammo and equipment levels. These affect the unit behaviour and govern its ability and willingness to fire and your ability to tell it what to do.



Well, I needn't have worried – the Yanks won. Actually it demonstrates some imbalance in the scenario. Another move and the Germans would have been in, but with light, relatively cheap forces against expensive heavies, the Americans only had to knock out a few units to score many more points than the Germans could hope to do. Back to the drawing board....

aggressiveness and objectives by giving one of 12 different instructions. Units can be told to Attack, Defend, Support and Hunt, either Cautiously, Normally or All Out.

It isn't necessary to bother with time frames that don't interest you. Even if your only concern is the Eastern front in late 1943, there's enough to keep you interested for hours – if not for ever. Most periods are well covered with dozens of varieties of equipment to choose from and use. Tank buffs will expect the 1918 times frame to be a bit scarce, but World War II is very well covered. For example, there are no less than



(Top) The game automatically plots the quickest course for a unit going from A to B – but, be warned, it's not always the best.
(Above) A unit's range of vision can be determined at any time – any hex greyed out is out of sight.
(Top right) Right clicking on the unit description provides a detailed breakdown of its hit chances and attack values at any given range.

four variations of the US Sherman and six of the German PanzerKampfWagen III (E, F, H, J, L, and N for fellow know-it-alls) each with slightly different characteristics. Gun performance figures are somewhat fudged as the maximum direct firing range is 16 hexes for even the most powerful gun, leaving most guns effective at around 6 hexes at the most. However, the rules do account for three different varieties of the German 75mm antitank gun – short, medium and long, which shows some careful research. The rules don't need much in the way of explanation. Each unit has a chance to hit anything else in both its range and line of sight. Unlike most computer wargames, you can examine these chances and make decisions based on them. It sounds less than realistic, but hex and counter fans have been doing it for years, which is another reason why they'll be so pleased with TANKS!. The hit probability is modified by things like smoke (artillery and mortars can lay down smoke screens, as can modern tanks), terrain and unit morale and ammo levels. With a hit established, the attack value is compared with the defence value and randomised slightly to get the final result. Movement rules are based on the movement costs of each terrain.

Units, such as towed guns and infantry can be mounted or transported and certain types can be hidden. This applies only to infantry and mortars in general, which is a bad mistake in my opinion – most antitank guns and even armour could hide in woods and buildings to lay an ambush. Air strikes can be random, partially under your



control or entirely under your control depending on the version of the rules you're playing. There's a two per cent chance of friendly fire casualties so stay away from the enemy when the fly boys are coming in. And watch those Warthogs in Gulf War scenarios too....

The rules also cover random fires and smoke in hexes where vehicles are destroyed, indirect fire from SPG and towed artillery batteries, smoke screens, infantry digging in, close assault by armour and infantry, battlefield engineering and off-map reinforcements. I suppose I'd better mention the digitised sound effects and the high-res 256 colour graphics. No? Okay. They don't matter in a wargame anyway.

What puzzles me about TANKS! is that the rules and the techniques are perfectly good enough for the hex size to have been reduced and counters to have represented single vehicles, guns or infantry squads. One of the most successful board games of modern times, *Squad Leader*, was based on this concept, so in many ways TANKS! is a missed opportunity.

That said, it's without a doubt the best wargame I've ever come across. The dialogue buttons might be a bit too small on occasion. Measly infantry mortars are far too effective against armour – in reality it would take a pretty spectacular hit to knock out a tank. But that does not detract

from the fact that we've at last got a computer game that's as good as the board variety. What more could you ask? ☞

90 **SCORE**
Never mind the 50-ton tanks – this is 50-tons of solid, fire-belching wargame. Absolutely brilliant.

Minimum Memory: 2Mb RAM

Minimum Processor: 386/486

(DOS 5 or later)

Hard Disk Space Required: 5Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: Thunderboard, Pas,

Gravis, Sound Blaster PC speaker

Controls: Mouse only

Price: £39.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: SSI (US Gold) Tel: 021 625 3388

THE LANDS OF INHERIT THE EARTH

MAP



What better way to explore the lands of Inherit the Earth than with a map? Initially there are six locations for you to explore - Castle, Caves, Village, Sanctuary, House and Market Faire. Each location is inhabited by a different tribe of animals or solitary animal. Make sure you search each one with a fine tooth comb - you never know what clues you may find, and don't be afraid of asking questions.

MARKET FAIR



Market Fair. (You start here!) You'll be needing your wits about you at the Market Fair. Every tent and aisle looks identical so you'll have to keep track of where you've been and where you're going. The Fortune Teller may have something in your interest to tell you, provided she's not closed due to unforeseen circumstances that is. Clue: Money may be the root of all evil but it pays the rent!

VILLAGE



Ferret Village. Here's where all those hard-working ferrets hang out and also where you're likely to find some essential hardware to help you in your quest. Clue: In other words, it may be a very good idea to get completely smashed!

FOREST



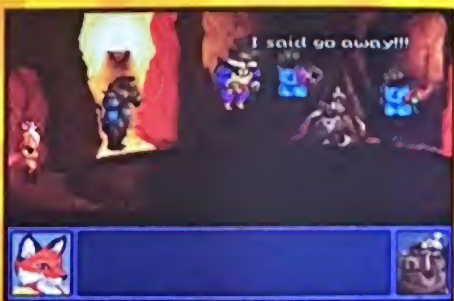
The Forest. The noble Elk Tribe reside in the forest and it is here that you must find the Elk King and speak to him regarding Elara's request. Clue: One day keeps the Doctor away.

CAVES2



The Caves. Once in the Rat Tunnels you must navigate your way through a maze of little passageways and doorways in your quest for more clues to lead you to the identity of the perpetrator of the dastardly deed. Clue: Find an abbreviated female sibling and she will give you the information you crave.

CASTLE



The Castle of Boars. Don't mess with the King of the Boars if you know what's good for you! Boars value food, wine, sex and mud baths above all else. These are my type of guys! Clue: There's nothing quite like it for cooling the blood.

SANCTUARY



Sanctuary. Return to the scene of the crime and speak to the Orb's keeper, Elara, to gain some info which will lead you to a vital clue concerning the Orb's disappearance. Clue: Look in the grounds for a watery clue.

TYCHO'S HOUSE



Tycho's House. Well I'll be doggone - just the place to find something rather useful! Clue: A dog after Patrick Moore's heart.

THE WILD LANDS



Inherit the Earth is extremely simple to control. The Main Screen is divided into different smaller windows. The main part is the Action Screen. Above is the Map of The Wild Lands which you must find on your travels. The Action Screen shows the current location, characters and their dialogue - It's the guts of the adventure.

INHERIT THE EARTH - QUEST FOR THE ORB

A game featuring a fair and lots of fluffy animals? **Teresa Vaughan** finds out if there's more besides....



WITH *Inherit the Earth - Quest for the Orb (ITE)* all the fun begins at the Fair, where Rif of the Fox Tribe (played by me aka you) has just won second prize (i.e. he lost) in a tournament against Scorry of the Rat Tribe. This animated opening sequence accompanied by full digitized speech is dead smart, and so you are reminded that if you weren't such a cheapskate and had a car drive, you could experience digitized speech throughout the game. Anyway, back to the plot. Rif's foxy lady, Rene, is in the process of repairing her man's wounded pride by praising his prowess on the games /fret when proceedings are brought to an abrupt closure by the arrival of a town crier who bears news of the theft of the precious Orb of Storms. All hell breaks loose and to cut a shaggy dog's tail off to a stump, Rif is accused of the dastardly crime and is sent on a quest to recover the Orb. But that's not all - Rif must then make it back to Rene, who is being held hostage by the boars, all before the next new moon.

Difficulty quotient!

ITE may not win any awards for originality of plot, but who cares? It's the gameplay that counts. Is it challenging? Has it got the correct difficulty quotient (DQ)? Too high and you give up in disgust. Too low and you've finished it before you can say, "Inherit the Earth - Quest for the Orb". Does it challenge those leetle grey cells? Do you keep on playing no matter what? Well, imagine it's 8.30 on Friday night and the *Brookside* theme tune is playing on the TV in the next room. You remember that this is the episode where you find out who Josh's real Dad is? Did our Beth score with our loveable Ron or has Mike Junior got lead in his pencil? The real test of an adventure's merit is: do you rush in to watch *Brookside* or carry on playing? Rush in to watch the *Brookside* on in *The Close*, of course - no game is that good. But I would miss an episode of

EastEnders to play this game, even if Grant was about to kick Tricky Dicks' head in.

Right from the outset, *ITE* impresses the socks off you with its logical mindbenders and



challenging puzzles. Each time you solve one you receive another part of the puzzle, enabling you to search for a further clue bringing you yet another step nearer to discovering who really purloined the Orb.

Many adventures have you whipping the ferret with the mango flavoured sausage in order to open the glass box, whereas, *ITE*, though sometimes incredibly cunning, is always believable and rational, which is what makes it so enjoyable. You progress not by accident but by intelligence, memory and lateral thinking, though there is an element of trial and error. At times I found it easy, only to find that the next puzzle was fiendishly difficult - you try working out how to cure Allama's daughter!

The animated graphics are of a standard that we have come to expect from a good adventure: colourful, well executed and detailed. I've seen some better, but I've seen a hell of a lot more that are worse. The world is composed of six mapped areas for you to explore: Caves, Forest, Village, Tycho's House, The Sanctuary and Castle. These areas are inhabited by the various tribes and thorough exploration will provide you with clues. Don't be afraid to revisit areas either. Appearances may be deceptive - at first glance the mapped world seems small, but it soon becomes apparent that there is a lot more to these lands than meets the eye.

By using the point-and-click interface, navigating your way around the various locations couldn't be simpler. If you select a destination, object or command, pixel-perfect accuracy is not required, and the controls are straightforward and very easy to use. But it's not all a bunch of roses -

The Command Screen has been replaced by a Conversation Screen, which pops up automatically when you select the Talk To option. You're given a choice of snappy ripostes or opening gambits to select - choose your words carefully. The characters currently in discussion (Rif and the Door Rat) are displayed to the far left and right of the screen.

What really makes me mad...

People who pull out of junctions in front of me and then immediately turn right with no indication - usually Volvo drivers wearing flat caps. And in the game - having to choose exactly the right command when I've already cracked the puzzle, can be mildly irritating. I also found going back to the same location was boring, particularly when all the individual locations look identical in some areas, like the village and rat warren.

The verdict

In *Inherit the Earth* there are masses of puzzles to solve and numerous locations to explore. It's a sensible game and solving puzzles requires more brain-power than guesswork. Moving around is simple, as is choosing commands and examining objects. It's really refreshing to find an adventure has been well thought out on the control side. *ITE* doesn't depart from the standard adventure format and as such, is nothing new, but if you're just looking for a gentle brainteaser that's easy on the eyes then you shouldn't be disappointed. If, on the other hand, you want something completely new à la *Myst*, look elsewhere. ☑



SCORE

A well-thought out, gentle little brainteaser for those who fancy a "sensible" game.

Minimum Memory: 1Mb

Minimum Processor: 386 Upwards

Hard Disk Space Required: 15Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

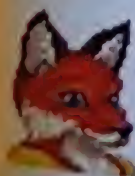
Sound Cards Supported: AdLib, Roland, Sound Blaster Pro/16/32, Pro Audio Spectrum, Gravis UltraSound, Aria

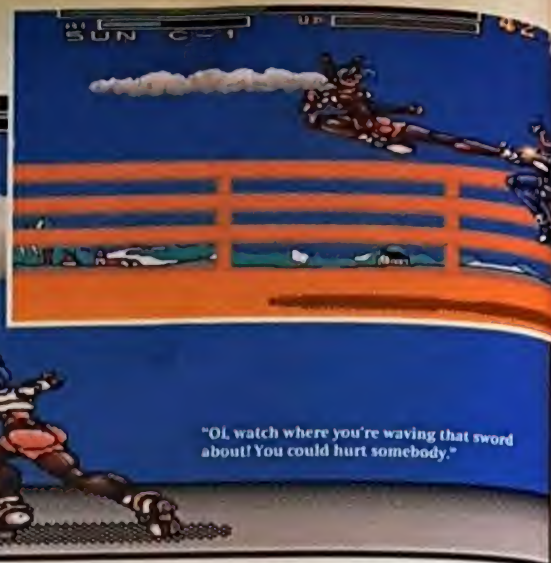
Controls: Mouse

Comments: Requires Expanded Memory

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: US Gold **Tel:** 021 606 1800





METAL AND LACE:

The battle of the Robo Babes

Chris Anderson is always to be found hanging around the cutlery and lingerie departments during the sales. Don't ask why, just read on.

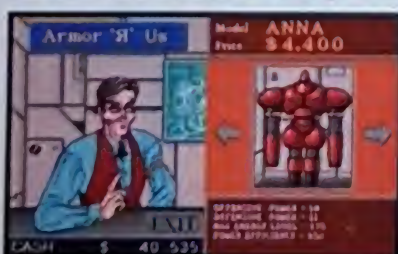


ELL WHO would have guessed it? Just when you thought every type of PC game imaginable had already been thought of,

along comes *Metal and Lace*, a beat 'em up for adults. It's a beat 'em up in as much as, er, you beat people up, and it's aimed firmly at male adults because it's got lots of sexy bits in it. I suspect a large percentage of our male readers will not be fooled by Megatech's thinly disguised attempt to cash in on its interest in the opposite sex, so I'll cover the actual gameplay elements first, and you can skip the rest of the review if you wish.

The game is set on MeCha Island. On this island you will find various luscious, pouting, Robo Babes, who are all waiting for the chance to kick numerous varieties of excrement out of you. Your ultimate goal is to become the best Robo Fighter of all time by winning the four major tournaments on the island. You start the game in the bar with a set amount of cash. Before you do any serious scrapping, you'll need to pop into the shops and buy yourself a suit of armour and, of course, lots of power-ups.

Armour AI does a neat line in smart-looking suits.



Armour AI's is the place to go for your suit of armour. There are seven suits to choose from, all with different advantages and disadvantages and the best ones are obviously the most expensive. In the old man's shop you can buy power-ups ranging from energy chargers to artificial intelligence modules which, when activated, control your fighter for you while you sit back and watch.

There are plenty of ways to finance your little shopping spree in the bar itself. If you talk to the tough guy, he'll be more than happy to give you lots of cash, which is great. What isn't so great, is that you have to keep clicking on him to listen to him talk and then wait for the bits where he gives you the money. Apart from being repetitive, this is doubly annoying because all the characters in the bar talk to you in computer digi-speak, and this guy has got the most irritating and dumb accent I have ever heard. If you have even



The bar is where you access all the game's options and talk to the tough guy - undisputed winner of the stupidest accent in the universe award.

a tiny degree of intelligence, prepare to have it profoundly insulted by listening to this idiot coming out with such philosophical gems as "beer and Robo Babes, what a life". The tough guy isn't your only means of accumulating cash. You can also get cash by looking under the ashtray.



(Left) Activate your artificial intelligence and go to sleep until the fight's over.



listening to the radio until it announces you've won a competition, and talking to the barman. Once you've got your suit of armour and plenty of power-ups, you can pay the girl at the bar a tournament registration fee and prepare for battle.

Battling the Babes

There are four tournaments in all, and in each one you have to defeat the seven Robo Babes and then take on one of the Ultimate Champions. The actual fights aren't very difficult to win. You soon get to know the best way to defeat your opponents no matter what armour they're wearing. Some of the armours, like the Anna suit, can be beaten just by crouching down and kicking all the time. Once you've sussed the weaknesses of each armour it's simply a case of going through the motions for each level until you eventually win the game. As long as you always have enough cash to buy the power-ups, you'll never lose. If you get really bored (and believe me you will), you can always activate your artificial intelligence module and watch the computer win the fight for you. So, the battles are a bit of a disappointment, to say the least. There is however, another side to the game which is presumably supposed to make up for the lack of excitement in the gameplay. Namely...

Rude boys

Here's what you've all been waiting for, the part of the review where we discuss "the



(Above) The girls get more adventurous as the game progresses.

naughty bits". Don't get too excited, though. We are not talking titillating animations here, we're talking badly drawn graphic stills. Once you've beaten the Robo Babes, clicking on a poster in the bar brings you to a screen where you can see the Babes. They talk to you (there's digitised overlays for the voices) and tease you with such stunning witticisms as "I hope you've got the hot iron I need". The further into the game you go, the more clothes the Babes take off. It's a sort of reward for having beaten the crap out of them on a given level. The pictures have very little detail and all the Babes look like Japanese Barbie Dolls.

All the Robo Babes come equipped with at least two lethal weapons. (Fnaarr, fnaarr.)

(Left) The kit removal screen. Click on a girl and watch her strut her stuff.

(Below) Choose your power-ups carefully before going into battle.



Frankly, I can't see anyone getting excited by this sort of stuff, so if your main interest in the game is in the "adult" material, I'm afraid you'll be sadly disappointed with what's on offer.

Easy peasy lemon squeezy

So, the gameplay's nothing to write home about, and the sexy bits aren't sexy. Just when you think things couldn't possibly get any worse, they do. Simply by going into the bar after every fight and clicking on the individuals to get money, you can amass a small fortune in about an hour. Combine this with the extra money bonuses you get for winning the fights, and you'll soon be able to buy as many power-ups as you like. You then find yourself in a position where you can use your artificial intelligence for every fight, so you don't even have to play the second half of the game yourself. You also find yourself in a position where you are bored shitless and are playing the game just to get it over with.

Metal and Lace is a disaster. It bored me to tears and I completed it on the day I installed it. Avoid at all costs. ☹



SCORE

Totally devoid of any entertainment value whatsoever.

Minimum Memory: 640K

Minimum Processor: 386

Hard Disk Space Required: 15Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: Sound Blaster, and compatibles, Sound Blaster Pro, Thunder board, Pro Audio Spectrum Sound Master, AdLib Gold

Controls: Thrustmaster, keyboard, joystick

Comments: There is an under 13 version of the game which contains no nudity, and an over 18 version which contains partial nudity. Both versions are the same price but if you buy the under 13 version first you'll have to pay £4.99 plus postage for the upgrade.

Price: £39.99 Release Date: Out now

Publisher: Screen Multimedia Tel: 0923 858043

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PC

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CD-ROM

reviews

Laboratory Name:

Lab #243

Research Topic:

Materials Processing

Staffing Status:

None / Need: 2

Functional Status:

There are more games than ever before being produced either initially or only for CD-ROM these days and barely a major disk-based release goes by without a CD conversion following. The next 7 pages are devoted to the best the new medium has to offer, and as you'll see, the best is very good indeed.

THE GAMES in this section are subject to the same marking system as the disk-based games we review. You'll find a guide to our marks on page 43.

Games that score between 80 and 89 per cent receive our Recommended award. Games that fall into this category are likely to appeal to you if you have a liking for that particular genre.

Games scoring over 90 per cent are Classics. They redefine the state-of-the-art in computer games and most game players will thoroughly enjoy them regardless of their genre.

Naturally, the In Perspective and Tech Specs boxes work in the same way, but

there are some other factors that you will need to take into account when purchasing CD-ROM games.

Drive Speed: Not all CD-ROM drives perform equally well, but generally they can be divided into types according to the sustained access speed. Older games will work quite happily on any drive, but most newer games will need a double-speed drive to function well, and as the year goes on some games will appear which demand triple-speed drives. To avoid disappointment, you should check that your drive speed is sufficient for the game you are about to buy.

Windows: Because Windows is an integral part of multimedia systems, many multimedia games are designed to run in

WHAT'S IN OUR DISK CADDIES?

Some games get played, reviewed and then lost. Others hang around a lot longer. This is what's currently monopolising our CD drive. Not necessarily the best games around, but the ones we keep coming back to.

Sam & Max
Shadow of the
Comet
International
Tennis Open
UFO
Outpost

this environment. Although most modern PCs are supplied with Windows, not all PCs are capable of running Windows very efficiently. You may find that some games run very slowly when running under Windows unless you have a Windows graphics accelerator. You can speed up Windows graphics operation by adding more memory, which you should allocate as Extended rather than Expanded memory and setting up a large permanent virtual memory space on your hard drive. You should not attempt to run other Windows applications concurrently with games as this will severely degrade their performance. Finally, running Windows in enhanced mode will help to get your multimedia games up to speed.

MPC levels: True multimedia games may need to be run on a machine meeting a certain MPC level. Most multimedia games demand MPC level 2. As a rough guide, this is what's needed to meet MPC level 2: double-speed CD drive, 80386 33Mhz PC, 16-bit sound card, SVGA card and monitor, and Windows 3.1.



Outpost

When an opportunity came along to fire some-poor-body out into the depths of space in order to set up a colony far from the Solar System, every head in the office turned towards **Daniel "Nail joke anyone?" Emery.**

T

HE SIMPLEST way to explain Outpost is as follows: it's *Sim City 2000* in space, but more complex.

The main thrust of the program is a simulation of the difficulties of setting up a colony in space. This involves everything from picking a suitable solar system to choosing what design of swimming pool to give the "Jones's". To call this a strategy game is an understatement. A bloody big understatement. You have to plan many moves into the future, and organise events accordingly. Get it wrong and your next public statement will be your epitaph.

Prelude

The game itself is set 50 years into the future, and a giant asteroid is on a collision course with the earth. The media dubs it "Vulcan's Hammer", and while everybody else is desperately renewing their subscription to *Greenpeace*, a grey corporation has quietly assembled a space "ark".

In a last ditch attempt to save the Earth, a nuke is launched, but it's about as effective as trying to down a 747 with an asparagus tip. So giving two fingers to the bank manager, off into outer space you go. (See "Shot into space" box.)

Wham bam, thank you mam

So finally you've arrived at the planet of your dreams (actually, of your nightmares). It's about this point that you notice one problem. Two. Well three actually.

One : There's no sign of life.

Two : It's incredibly Hot.

Three : There's no breathable air.

As if that isn't enough, some of the crew judge you to be totally incompetent, and so run off with half your gear to start a home of

their own. Without you, of course.

Eventually though, a site near local resources, on good soil with a very pleasant view of the surroundings, is found. Voila - the Des. Res. of mankind.

Mines

There is one essential requirement to building a thriving colony on a barren planet, and that's raw materials. While the colonists have been tunnelling and building like crazy, it becomes obvious that the supplies you brought with you aren't going to last for ever. So



(Above) The satellite in orbit.

you look for the nearest mineral seam, which is marked with a flashing beacon, and send the robots down the mines (after all, they're cheaper than children.) This will then start producing the essential life blood with which to build future structures.

Eh?

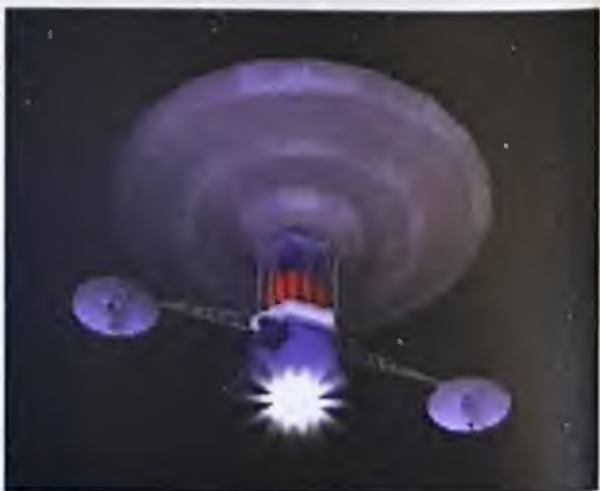
What normally happens round about now is that all the building stops. Eh? What's going on? The answer is that iron doesn't just come out of the ground (Yes it does. Ed.) A smelter is required to convert all those ores into the finished product.

Talking of ores, red light districts (cheap gag), drinking dens and the like spring up in crime ridden areas, but more on that later.

The principle of the game

The first task is to erect the bare necessities for survival, such as housing, medical facilities, factories and the like. An essential item of any colony is a DIRT team (not a division of the vice squad, but a Disaster Instant Response Team). Their job is to deal with some of the little surprises the planet springs. (See "Panic" box.)

Assuming the colony has survived and the raw materials are available, it's time to start building items such as labs, swimming pools, shops etc. The importance of scientific research is self



The colony ship under construction in the Earth's orbit.

"At the end of the day, this is a very labour intensive game, with hours of gameplay..."

Basement

This is my science park. Don't want all these frustrated scientists wandering into my old brother, you never know what the wherfs could catch off them.

Key:

- 1) Secretly flash research centre.
- 2) Not so flash laboratory.
- 3) A lab on a par with an inventor's garden shed.
- 4) Admin. building. Full of accountants, pen pushers and the like. Strangely enough though, its grey too.
- 5) Un-excavated land.
- 6) Bulldozed land.
- 7) Unexplored.
- 8) L.R.

Mezzanine

My "5" level. There are swimming pools, shops, shaggy... (Enough is enough, okay? Ed). This is where the masses live and do all those things that you do when your not dead.

Key:

- 1) Housing facility.
- 2) Lift.
- 3) Recreation centre. This increases the morale of the people and gives them something to do when there not hanging around the red light district.
- 4) Medical centre. Keeps your population healthy and puts morale up.
- 5) Excavating land.
- 6) Red light district.
- 7) Factory. Here's where you produce all those useful items such as tury dice, golf balls etc.
- 8) Reactor core. Avoid it.

Surface

This is where you put those things that you can't put anywhere else; dangerous laboratories, mines, smelters and, of course, the police.

Key:

- 1) Agri dome. Grows food.
- 2) Lift. Going down.
- 3) Hat laboratory. This is where you perform dangerous experiments. Liable to explode without warning.
- 4) Building site.
- 5) Smelter. This is where you process all the raw materials from the mine into usable products.
- 6) Mine.
- 7) Fusion reactor.
- 8) Command centre. The nerve centre for your colony, and controls all operations.
- 9) CHAP facility. Produces air, water and the like.
- 10) Police station.

Surface

Mezzanine

Basement

PANIC!!!

Not only do you have to contend with searing radiation, an unbreathable atmosphere and extremes of temperature, but the planet also has other delights up its metaphorical sleeves. Here's a selection of some of the more popular ones:

Solar Flares

This is when the neighbouring sun gets a little over active and starts spewing gas into space. Very pretty you may think, except this will barrage the surface of the planet with a lethal dose of radiation. Quick, get the sun cream!

Asteroid strike

Getting a sense of déjà vu? It's the same disaster that wiped Earth from the face of the map, and now it's your turn.

Plague

Always breaks the ice at parties and, unless you've developed a cure, you're stuffed. However, if you are of the genocidal persuasion, you can build a mono rail to your next door neighbour and give him the lurgey too.

Earthquake

It's not my fault. (Geologist's gag!)

Electrical Storm

Don't fly a kite. Don't climb to the top of the highest tower, and hold a finger up in the air. Keep animals locked indoors. Light blue touch paper, etc.

There are other little gems, such as your robot crew having a habit of diving off cliffs, driving under falling rocks etc. It's tough being a robot.

DIRT Team

These are the poor buggers that have to clean up afterwards. Make sure you've got plenty of them, otherwise your rule will be rapidly cut short.

Panic Button

A nice touch.



Shot Into Space

Getting from A to B (or Earth to an Unknown planet if you prefer) is not a simple process. Here's a brief rundown of the steps involved:

1 Here you select four possible star systems and launch a probe. This means that when you get to Jupiter to fuel up, you'll know if there are any planets worth having.

2 It's at this point that you decide what you are going to take with you on your trip. Will it be extra people or hardware to keep them alive? And why doesn't it give you an option to screen your colonists for feminists?

3 Here's your last contact with mankind. Once you've fuelled up, it's blast off time!

4 The last step is to select the destination. The probes you launched will inform you of the probability of planets. If there is a 0 probability of a planet, *Don't go!* You'll only wind up dead. You have been warned.

5 All systems go - see ya!

6 Home sweet home. Cozy looking. Warm. Hot. Bloody hot. It's sodding 450C for Christ sake!! Oh well, no turning back now!

7 The second last step. It's time to launch all the expensive gimmicks you brought with you. Hope they work.

8 Decisions, decisions, decisions. Stay out of the red and in the black. And here's what you could have landed on. A lovely chasm for two in Martian pink.

9 O dam...dam...dam...!

10 Well, this is it. One small step for mankind. One giant leap for me! Hi honey, this is home!



1 Star Selection

<input type="checkbox"/> Alpha Aquilae	<input type="checkbox"/> Kruger 60
<input type="checkbox"/> Alpha Centauri A	<input type="checkbox"/> 70 Ophiuchi A
<input type="checkbox"/> Alpha Centauri B	<input type="checkbox"/> 36 Ophiuchi B
<input type="checkbox"/> Barnard's Star	<input type="checkbox"/> 36 Ophiuchi A
<input type="checkbox"/> Beta Hydri	<input type="checkbox"/> Procyon
<input type="checkbox"/> Delta Pavonis	<input type="checkbox"/> Ross 248
<input type="checkbox"/> Epsilon Eridani	<input type="checkbox"/> Sigma Draconis



2 Star System Sigma Draconis



equatorial diameter * 0.95 (12,104km)

4 Orbital Launch System

SATELLITES

<input type="checkbox"/> Solar Satellite	None
<input type="checkbox"/> Weather Satellite	None
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication Satellite	Ready to Launch
<input type="checkbox"/> Orbital Observer	Standby
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deploy Satellite	



9 Interstellar Launch System

LAUNCH STATUS

<input type="checkbox"/> Interstellar Probe	None
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Starship	Ready for launch

INTERSTELLAR PROBE

<input type="checkbox"/> Pressurize Fuel System	Status: Standby
<input type="checkbox"/> Launch Probe	Status: Launch

STARSHIP





evident: the more you discover, the easier survival becomes (a slice of *Civilization* here). The other items will increase the morale of the colonists, making them harder workers, thus increasing the production levels.

Later

As the game progresses, the fruits of the research team start to become apparent. New improved items and upgraded versions of existing facilities become available. Old housing estates can be bulldozed down, and shiny new high-rises erected in their place. There are also environmentally-friendly power sources, space stations, mono rails and the like to be had.

Eventually though, you've got it all. A thriving colony, great neighbours, resources by the bucket load. This is step one. There are now two routes to take (simultaneously if you like). Terra-forming your barren planet into a virtual garden of Eden, and setting up a spaceship to go and do it all over again!

If you are looking for an "end" to this game, then adventuring into space a second time is it. Once the colony ship has blasted off, it's all over. It has to be stressed that the game never actually has to end. Colonisation of another planet only occurs when you activate the launch button, but there is no pressure to do so. Therefore, you can watch your colony grow, while at the same time creating an Earth-type planet. This is fun, but can take an awful long time.



The program itself was written by a geezer called Bruce Balfour, who prior to joining Sierra was a research scientist for the NASA space research facility. Consequently, the game itself is a fairly accurate representation of an ideal set up with which to colonise space. The asteroid collision scenario is quite plausible, and it's a sobering thought as to "what would we do if this happened in real life". The game is interspersed with animated video clips, the quality of which is superb. This does a lot to liven things up, although, be warned, you will probably become anal retentive playing this game anyway.


Outpost is an interesting hybrid between *Civilization* and *Sim City 2000*. You have to build structures to your colony, while at the same time exploring surrounding areas for fresh resources. Choosing when and where facilities are built and forward planning isn't just good advice, it can mean the difference between survival and a slow death. Production levels have to be maintained and the population has to keep breeding.

Crime is also a problem: if your housing estates get too rough, red light districts spring up. Scientific research is critical to progress through the game, as is an adequate supply of power and raw materials.

There is a down side to the game, though, and that is it runs under Windows. So what? Well it means that if your system isn't configured properly, you will be dead and buried before the game has even started. The game on a poorly-configured system is agonisingly painful, and although the company recommends a 386SX or higher, a 486 is a safer option.

Heavy-duty guide books

Outpost comes with the usual manual etc., but there's also a book, published by Prima, that gives you a much greater insight into the workings of the game. This book is priced at £18.49 and - despite being packed full of unfunny American gags about solicitors and the like - is a great help if you take your strategy games seriously. At just under 400 pages, it's fairly heavy stuff.

At the end of the day, though, this is a very labour intensive game with hours of gameplay and graphics, which make the animated sequences of other games pale into insignificance. If you are into strategy games, then this could well be one of the best this year. 

IN PERSPECTIVE

Had this game been written to run in DOS, it would have been fast enough to be comparable to *Civilization*. As it is, the speed has let down an otherwise excellent game.

Civilization

Theme Park

Sim City 2000

OutPost

(Top left) Your luxury apartment on the colony express.
(Bottom left) They just don't make satellites like they used to. I remember back in the ol' days...



SCORE

A superb game; addictive if you've got the hardware, hell if you haven't.

Minimum Memory: 4Mb

(Although 8 is advisable)

Minimum Processor: 386SX

Hard Disk Space Required: 6Mb or 36Mb for full installation

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA & SVGA

Sound Cards Supported: All Windows compatible cards.

Controls: Mouse

Comments: You have to have a good Windows set up, or the game will slow to a deathly pace.

Price: £49.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Sierra On-Line **Tel:** 0734 303171

Beneath a Steel Sky

Miles Tudor leaves his medieval past behind him for a moment to dabble with Sierra's futuristic new graphic adventure.

BENEATH A STEEL SKY is another tale of rags to riches. After the usual over long "where did I come from?" expositional sequence, the protagonist, Forster, finds himself escaping from a crashed chopper and the game starts. To begin with, you know very little. The first objective seems to be to find your way from high up in the clouds of the urban sky city to ground level, but LINC, the corporate city's warped computer network, has taken a frightening interest in you.

The puzzle-solving in this graphic adventure is pretty straightforward. It basically comes down to saying the right things to the right people and manipulating the right objects in the right places. In the end it's the characters that really make this game worth-

while. Although the regional accents and one-liners are predictable and corny, they still made me laugh out loud on numerous occasions. Particularly hilarious were the North Yorkshire factory owner, the insurance salesman and the old geezer in the boiler room - "Dant touch thaaat, eets eelectrical, tha' is!". Forster and his buddy, Joey, regularly strike up an amusing repartee, and although the humour throughout is of an adult nature (so I'm told), there's nothing particularly outrageous. Some of the jokes are even

reasonably topical, such as the supergun gag.

The game is gloriously simple to use - left mouse button to move around and examine, right mouse button to use; the only key used is for options and game saving. The inventory pops down when needed, and when necessary you just click on your choice of dialog. With you controlling Forster the game progresses at its own

leisurely pace as you discover clues as to who you really are,

what's going on in the city and where to go next.

As for installing the game, well that was a doddle: the only files to go on the hard drive take up less than 1K and the save games at around 50K each.

At various points in the game you get to dip into the virtual world LINK SPACE (once you have a Schrieblmann port fitted). Don't expect any fantastic Virtual Reality stuff, the game stays exactly the same but the scenery and icons are different, it's not been badly done, though.



(Above) Admitting to workmen that you are "trying to find yourself" is liable to get you into fights... (Left) I hate to tell him, you can't get sores and boils from contact with robots.



Sadly, the pace doesn't really pick up at any point. Forster ambles along at a moderate stroll, being the laid-back smoothy that he is, and rarely does anything strenuous (which, I suppose, gives you plenty of time to take in the marvellous Dave Gibbons comic book scenery).

I can't help thinking that more could have been done with this game. It's not exactly small, but I can't see it taking people a huge amount of time to complete, especially if they are hardened adventurers. And, being a CD-ROM game, I expected a lot more from it, rather than just a spruced-up floppy disk version with speech. The speech is worthwhile, all the same, although the accompanying music is a bit cheesy. If you like undemanding adventure games in the LucasArts mould, then *Beneath a Steel Sky* will appeal to you. But hardened veterans will probably find it too shallow. **Z**



SCORE

Comic book-style adventure with an excellently funny dialogue, but lacking any real depth.

Minimum Memory: 640K

Minimum Processor: 386

Hard Disk Space Required: Negligible amount for saved games

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA

Sound Cards Supported: AdLib, Sound Blaster, Roland

Controls: Keyboard, Mouse

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out Now

Publisher: Virgin **Tel:** 081 960 2255



Beneath a Steel Sky on CD-ROM doesn't really live up to what you expect from such a product



(Below) The sharp wit of your strange boiler-room buddy



Litil Divil

Mark Burgess goes through Hell for Gremlin's jolly arcade romp.

LITIL DIVIL is an adventure/puzzle game in which you plod through mazes to find money and food. You play a grumpy devil that must get through a warren to reach the Mystic Pizza of Plenty. All your predecessors have died in the attempt and now you are left with the short straw. In every level there are rooms which involve combat or puzzle solving. Some require intuition, some need lateral thinking and others can be solved with sheer, dumb persistence.

Often it is a matter of mixing the right ingredients for a potion or turning switches a certain way. The combat rooms will often need a special piece of equipment from the shop. There is one of these on each level and there are gold pieces scattered around the place. Each level also has a rest room - which is not what you think. It's for saving and restoring games, not writing your dentist's phone number on the wall.

While you are wandering around the maze you are using up



energy. Unsuccessful attempts at the rooms (you get three) also drain your reserves. There are apples and other bits of food scattered around, but you still need to move quickly to complete each level before your energy runs out. If it does, you get dragged off to a torture chamber by the ever watchful guardian. Then its vile torture until you expire.

Work for idle hands

Two things set the game apart when it first appeared. The sense of humour (good but unobtrusive) and the smoothness of the animation. Litil Divil is like an interactive cartoon with a perky soundtrack and some nice effects, but this makes serious demands on your hardware. The floppy version used up 30MB of hard disk, so this was a game crying out for the storage capacity of CD-ROM.

And yet... the problem with the floppy version was that the scene

(Below) One of the puzzle rooms; you'll need quick reflexes - and a bucket.
(Below left) The penalty for failure is a quick trip to the dungeon.



SCORE

Excellent, original and addictive

Minimum Memory: 560k base RAM, 4Mb expanded

Minimum Processor: 386

Hard Disk Space Required: 2 Mb

Graphics Modes Supported: VGA with 256k video RAM


Sound Cards Supported: Sound Blaster, AdLib or Roland and 100 per cent compatibles

Controls Supported: Joystick or keyboard

Price: £34.99 **Release Date:** Out now

Publisher: Gremlin **Tel:** 0742 753 423

change graphics - when you looked into a room for instance - took an age to load. The CD-ROM version doesn't improve this. In fact, with the slow transfer speeds of CD-ROM drives it is even slightly worse. While the game is running, the animation is smooth and perfectly acceptable. If you have the patience to wait for the scene changes, there should be no worries.

The other hardware problem you should be aware of is that the game is very picky about configuration. At least 3.5MB expanded and 560k base memory: with CD and sound card drivers, you will be pushed for space. 

(Below) Success as the spider's head explodes.



Shadow of the Comet

Laurence Scottford revisits Lovecraft's New England to re-discover the strange goings on in Infogrames' Cthulu game on CD.



INFOGRAMES' first official *Call of the Cthulu* game (which was initially reviewed back in issue 2), is a perfect example of how a strong plot is more important to a graphic adventure than slick graphics and smart presentation. Of course, if you've got both in the same game, then you've probably got a winner: a fact that the LucasArts team is living testament to. The disk-based version of *Shadow of the Comet* suffers from a clunky, keyboard-only interface and an engine that is graphically inferior to many others.

While it has nice touches such as close-ups when characters are speaking, or when certain actions need highlighting, it is also remarkably devoid of any form of character scaling, so people appear to shrink as they walk towards the front of a location.

Despite its minor failings *Shadow of the Comet* is still an enjoyable and engrossing adventure, and that's entirely down to a gripping plot. The story is set in the little New England fishing town of Illsmouth. Some 76 years before the time in which the story is set, Lord Boleskine, an eminent astronomer, had visited the area to investigate some strange constellations. He discovered that the

**"Despite minor failings
Shadow of the Comet is
still an enjoyable and
engrossing adventure..."**



(pardon the pun) of Lovecraft's writings perfectly. You begin your visit innocently enough, with the intention of photographing the night sky, but over a period of three days, as you wait for the comet to arrive, you become embroiled in even stranger goings-on.

The creature speaks

The most obvious difference between this CD version and its predecessor is that all of the characters have acquired the power of speech. You can still have the captions if you wish, but since the speech is quite clear and fairly well acted, as CDs go, there's no

particular need. One thing stops the speech from adding a great deal of atmosphere to this game: no attempt has been made at lip-synching. Normally this wouldn't be a problem, but with *Shadow of the Comet*'s close-ups of characters it just looks ridiculous.

Another welcome addition is a mouse-driven interface. The only problem with this pop-up icon bar is it's quite clearly a "bolt-on" affair, and so clunky that you may well end up reverting to keyboard control anyway.

Finally, the CD also has a simulation of the Lovecraft museum which you can wander through. It's hardly a multimedia sensation, but a nice touch nonetheless.

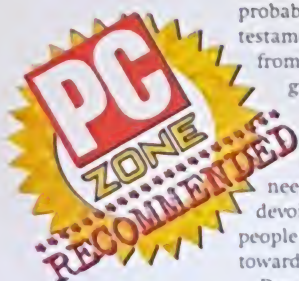


SCORE

A worthwhile reworking of a great game, but still very idiosyncratic.

(Above) Lord Boleskine decides that perhaps he did overdo the tequila slammers a little. (Left) Illsmouth may look quaint but it has all the holiday appeal of Peckham.

Minimum Memory: 2Mb
Minimum Processor: 386SX
Hard Disk Space Required: Less than 1Mb
Video Modes Supported: VGA
Sound Cards Supported: Sound Blaster
Control Devices Supported: Mouse, keyboard
Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Infogrames **Tel:** 071 738 8199



pattern of stars above the town does indeed become distorted each time Halley's comet passes overhead. But he also discovered something else: something so horrifying that it warped his mind and he ended his days in anguish in a hospital for the insane. Now, in 1910, a promising young scientist, John Parker (aka you, of course), sets off for Illsmouth, determined to prove that Boleskine's claims are founded in truth.

It's all typical Lovecraftian stuff. In fact, it captures the spirit

10-6 (page)
 10-7 (page)
 10-8 (page)
 10-9 (page)
 10-10 (page)
 10-11 (page)

FEATURE

Games On The Dark Side

Gam

Games aren't kids stuff. Of course, as far as the PC is concerned they never have been, but recently the whole issue of games with strong adult themes has been brought to the attention of the general public. **Laurence Scottford** and **Jeremy Wells** address the thorny subject of censoring games and reveal some adult games past, and present.

Now, like Dennis Hopper, who has previously been associated with films dealing with adult themes are now becoming involved in interactive movies

by Laurence Scottford

9€

PC
ILLUSTRATION

Games On The Dark Side

THAT computer games have escaped the attention of the censor for so long is strange. The answer may be that, to many people who don't play computer games, they are strictly the domain of children, and therefore it should follow that they are no more offensive than an episode of *Blue Peter* or, at worse, a Roald Dahl story. But it was that same naive, and totally erroneous viewpoint that started the alarm bells ringing, because when these people were first exposed to a game with a more adult tone than say, *Super Mario Land* or *Sonic the Hedgehog*, they believed that such games had been created to corrupt minors. They simply could not conceive that some games may have been designed with an adult-only audience in mind.

Of course, workers in all new mediums are granted a brief period in which they are allowed an uncharacteristically liberal freedom. This was certainly the case with the stage and the screen until the more authoritarian elements of society decided that such powerful and emotive means of communication could not be allowed to continue unchecked. Now that those in authority have realised just what the humble PC is capable of, they are also keen to rein it in before programmers, graphic artists and designers begin to take for granted the freedom they've enjoyed so far.

Games are, in fact, potentially more dangerous than film, stage or book, because they are interactive. They offer the consumer a way to actually live out his or her fantasies rather than merely taking them on-board in a passive way. Couple this

with the greatly exaggerated vision presented in the popular press, which insists on showing how warped the world will look from the other side of Cyberspace through a Virtual Reality headset, and it is not difficult to see why a lot of people are worried.

The Ratings Game

Although games have never been subject to a rating system, as films are, that has not deterred some of the more entrepreneurial publishers from imposing some form of self-censorship on themselves. One company, the now defunct CRL, was the first to introduce a voluntary 15 rating for its game based on Bram Stoker's classic tale, *Dracula*.

Naturally, this inspired a lot of over-excited 15 year olds to dash round to their local software vendor, £10 clutched in sweaty palm in the

hope that they would be able to procure something a little bit naughty. Unfortunately for the 15 year olds concerned, the game was a lot more tame than the rating might have led them to believe.

A 15 rating is also proudly displayed on a rather more contemporary interactive version of the classic horror novel, Software Toolwork's *Dracula Unleashed*. Only in this case, the rating is a kosher one, as issued by the British Board of Film Censors.

Currently the only way that a game can be given an official ratings certificate is if it contains enough video footage that it falls into the domain of the BBFC. Even then, it is only the video sequences that are rated, and the certificate gives absolutely no indication of how adult the rest of the game's content is.

Sex...

The most obvious area of concern is the growing degree of sexual content in games. Sex in games is actually nothing new, although some of the more gross, not to mention immature, examples are to be

found in the public domain and shareware markets. One example is *Astrotit*, a mind-numbingly boring shoot 'em up in which the single, mildly original feature is that the normal space ship or laser turret controlled by the player has been replaced by a badly drawn bit of male anatomy.

Those deviant games that do make it into the stores tend to be variants on the strip poker theme. A recent example being *Cover Girl Strip Poker* which features well-known

female celebrities from the pages of *The Sunday Sport* revealing their charms. Again, this has a genuine BBFC 18 certificate by virtue of the fact that the static images of the ladies in various states of undress are linked with some badly shot monochrome video sequences.

The Sunday Sport isn't the only adult publication to go interactive. Both *Playboy* and *Fiesta* have climbed willingly onto the band-wagon, producing everything from Windows personal organisers with dirty pics to CDs packed full of unclothed females and yet more strip poker games.

These programs can, at least, be clearly identified as adult, so parents and retailers alike can prevent them from falling into the hands of children. There are many games, however, that are not so obviously adult, but still contain themes that are unsuitable for younger players. A good example is the Anime series of games from US company, Megatech. These have titles like *Cobra Mission* and feature animated characters which, although they may look like the sort of thing kids lap up on a Saturday morning, are far from innocent.



The pictures on this page and others like them are readily available to anybody with a CD drive.





This recently popularised form of animated entertainment originates from Japan and commonly includes provocative images of baby-faced oriental girls in revealing clothing or, in the most extreme titles, graphic scenes of rape and violence against women.

To be fair to Megatech, it has never attempted to conceal the nature of its products, and they are clearly marked with a recommended age range (which acts as a form of censors' rating, albeit a self-enforced one). The first of the company's titles to be officially released in this country, a beat 'em up called *Metal and Lace: Battle of the Robo Babes*, is released in two versions. The one on general sale is suitable for 13 year olds and upwards, but an upgrade is available which gives the game an 18 rating.

...and Violence

While it is not too difficult to decide whether software is unsuitable for children on the basis of its sexual content, violence is a more contentious issue. Should children have access to games like *Street Fighter II* in which the object is to beat your opponent to a pulp, or the even more graphic game on the same theme, *Mortal Kombat*. The latter caused something of a sensation with its depictions of fighters being decapitated. Again though, this is nothing new; an ancient 8-bit game called *Barbarian* had a move in which you could behead your opponent (the head of the luckless victim being dragged off by a troll-like creature while the remainder of the body crumpled to the floor), but at the time the press had still to latch onto games

as being a useful source of lurid and scaremongering headlines.

The situation has become a lot more critical now that games machines, PCs in particular, have become capable of displaying photo-realistic stills or video sequences. An early example of this trend for sanguinary realism was Accolade's adventure, *Waxworks*. While all of the graphics in this game are drawn traditionally, they are, nonetheless, horrific. The player does not have to get far into the game before being presented with gore-laden scenes depicting corpses with their guts spilling onto the floor or swinging from a noose.

Another game that has made the headlines is *Doom* in which, beyond an element of exploration and puzzle solving, the major objective of the game is inflicting violence on other creatures before they inflict it on you. Despite the realism of the graphics, however, *Doom*, surprisingly, hasn't created as much of a stir amongst moral campaigners as *Doom*'s previous 3D shoot 'em up, *Wolfenstein 3D*, which has more cartoon-like visuals. However, this probably has more to do with the fact that the enemies in *Wolfenstein 3D* are German soldiers, while the enemies in *Doom* are alien creatures.

I have seen the future

The whole question of adult themes in computer and video games is not going to go away. More and more publishers are embracing an older audience, especially on PC and PC CD-ROM. Given that this is the case, some form of control is necessary to

ensure that games that are intended for adults are played only by adults.

Whether the voluntary scheme recently introduced by ELSA is going to prove sufficient, or whether the government will be forced by public pressure to introduce a compulsory system remains to be seen.

Whatever happens, one thing that there is no doubt about is that the computer and video games industry is about to undergo a very radical transformation. ■

A sting in her tail

Infogrames rather look smut-loving punters by surprise some years ago when they released *Teenage Queen*. At first sight the game appears to be an extremely dodgy version of *Strip Poker*, in which your opponent is a very young femme fatale. The major difference between this and other games of its ilk is that the usual badly digitised shots of "models" have been replaced by hand-drawn artwork. But the game is even more unusual in that it has a twist. When the girl is finally unclothed, she continues to play another round. By this time the poor mac-clad punter is severely confused, and possibly just a little upset when, on losing the final round the object of his lust peels her skin off to reveal a robotic metal interior.



Extremely CD software

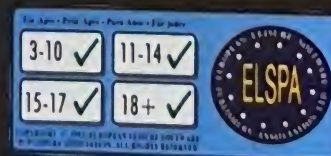


A particular problem for authorities in the UK is the recent proliferation of computer pornography. No, I don't mean magazines with dodgy pictures of uncased Pentiums, but the sort of material that is normally peddled by semi-legal establishments in the West End of London, transferred to electronic media. The sole outlet for this sort of stuff used to be bulletins board, with images being exchanged over the wire, but with the advent of CD-ROM as a cheap and accessible mass-storage medium, pornographers discovered a new way to distribute their work. Now that such CDs have begun to creep into the UK, the Government has announced plans to crack down on it, but so far has had little success in keeping it at bay with existing legislation.

The images shown here were taken from an easily obtained shareware CD. This reasonably harmless soft-porn is fairly readily available, but the determined can still get hold of extremely hard-core images without too much effort.

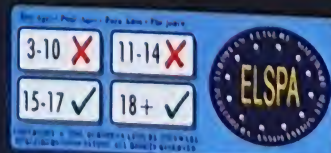
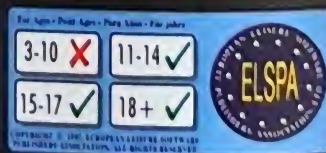
Software Ratings Explained

Leisure Software published by members of the European Leisure Software Publishers Association (ELSPA) in Europe is now subject to a voluntary classification system. The age guidelines which appear on the back of the software packaging consist of four boxes, one or more of which is ticked to indicate the recommended age range for the product. Age ranges are 3 to 10, 11 to 14, 15 to 17, and 18+. The system is administered and regulated by the Video Standards Council under contract to ELSPA. Members of ELSPA are requested to fill out an assessment form which lists criteria for placing a product within each of the bands. The completed form is then submitted to the VSC for final approval. The VSC also advises individual publishers of their obligations under the law as it applies to the Video Recordings Act.



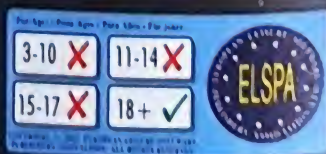
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The shape of things to come

Adult software is definitely here to stay, and with the advent of CD-ROM, more and more publishers are looking to create interactive versions of the likes of *Friday The 13th*, *Blue Velvet*, or *Emanuelle*. Here we preview some of the games, due to be released soon, that will be exploring new forms of strictly adult entertainment.

Voyeur

(Interplay)

Voyeur is currently only available for Phillips CD-I, but is shortly to be released by Interplay on PC CD. *Voyeur* caused something of a sensation when it first appeared by bringing the concept of adult games to a machine being touted as a family entertainment centre. The game is very much a tribute to Hitchcock's *Rear Window*. You live opposite the apartment belonging to presidential candidate, Hawke. Using a video camera, tape recorder and objects you collect, you must record the antics of the Hawke family and collect enough evidence to not only discredit Hawke as a presidential candidate, but to have him put permanently behind bars. Many of the scenes in *Voyeur* are steamy to say the least, so the game has a customisable code that restricts access. It even keeps a record of the last date and time it was played.



11th Hour

Virgin Interactive Entertainment

Trilobyte's first CD-ROM horror extravaganza was clearly aimed at adults, and the sequel looks to be headed even more in that direction, featuring, as it does, scenes of dismemberment and acts of violence. Like its predecessor, however, *11th Hour* is played out in a very tongue-in-cheek, mock-gothic horror way, so nobody should be really offended, let alone frightened. It is set, once again, in the mansion of deranged toymaker, Henry Stauf, only some years on. The producer of a top TV show has gone missing, and it's up to you to explore the house and find her.



Phantasmagoria

(Sierra On-line)

Phantasmagoria is the new interactive movie from Sierra's Roberta Williams (of *King's Quest* fame) currently under production in California and due for release at the end of the year.

Set in a spooky old Victorian House once owned by a mysterious magician, you play the part of the heroine, Adrienne, who has just moved into the house with her husband. Before you can say "Why are you wearing that glove with razors on the end?" things start to deteriorate badly. Your husband goes nuts and keeps trying to kill you, the two nice but dim types living in the carriage house mysteriously disappear and you get the feeling that the house wasn't quite the bargain you once thought it was – could it be... possessed?

Whilst many of the crop of new interactive movies are flagging their gory, cut 'n' slash content, Sierra is playing down the horror scenes in *Phantasmagoria*, preferring to plug the general mood and atmosphere the game is trying to create. "All the violence and gore in *Phantasmagoria* is quite low key and very integral to the plot," maintains game designer, Roberta Williams. "Most of the violent scenes are seen in flashback, through dreams or visions and this has given us a lot more control. There are violent scenes in the game, sure – the characters have to die somehow, but that really depends on how the player plays the game."

At the moment Sierra is considering including a gore button in the game where the player can choose to play the full, unedited version or opt not to see the full cut before they start to play. "It's very easy to do, you just have two edit points," remarks Roberta. "In the full version the player would actually see what happens to characters when they die, if they switched the rating the view would cut away from the scene just before it all happened and swing to a shot of, say, an axe head falling or a shadow, which can sometimes be even more effective, just like they used to do in the old horror movies of the '50s. We really haven't decided how far to go yet, but we're keeping our options open."

Whatever Sierra decide to do with *Phantasmagoria* it will certainly not be aimed at the same market as the popular *King's Quest* series of adventures. However, Sierra is confident that this will not affect how the game is received and is expecting a favourable reaction when *Phantasmagoria* is released at the end of the year. Contact Sierra on 0734 303322.





Harvester

(Merit Software)

When a software publisher launches a game billed as "the most horrific computer game ever designed" you presume that they're not talking about bad programming. Merit's *Harvester* is unashamedly gory and if the PR people had their way it would no doubt be bundled with a change of underwear.

Surprisingly, the plot seems pretty cliché free, even to your average terror-hardened horror-flick connoisseur. You've lived in the small town of Harvest all your 17 years and you're engaged to your high school sweetheart who just happens to be "the girl next door". You wake up one morning suffering from amnesia and you remember nothing. Everyone in the town you thought you knew so well seems like a stranger, but apart from that, everything's normal, a bit too normal. Just when you think that you're going to slip into a mid-west coma and will be lost in Dullsville USA forever, you discover that your fiancée is missing – and you find a hideous, bloody skull and spinal cord draped across her bed. Your only clue is an engraved invitation for you to enter "The Order of the Harvest Moon" – scary or what?

With its highly graphic blend of sex and violence, *Harvester* is bound to cause a stir with the morality freaks who believe computers to be the equivalent of having a direct line to Satan in your house. They aren't really pulling any punches with the gameplay either. It is, after all, an interactive movie and the game requires the player to not only hack their way through some pretty gruesome monsters, but eventually act out the part of a serial killer in order to penetrate the mysterious Order of the Harvest Moon. If that doesn't get the censors going, nothing will. *Harvester* is due for release early next year. Contact Merit on 091 385 7755.



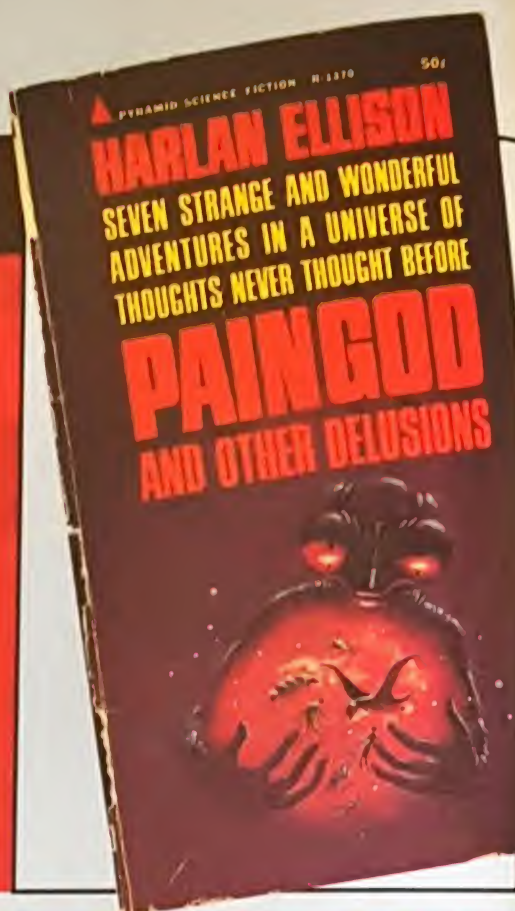
I Have No Mouth And I Must Scream

(Cyberdreams Interactive Entertainment)

Based on the short story by famed fantasy writer, Harlan Ellison, *I Have No Mouth, And I Must Scream* takes the player on a journey deep into the belly of a super computer where you (the player) must play the part of five different characters in order to defeat an all-powerful super computer that has destroyed all of humanity.

More dark and mysterious than overtly violent and gore-packed, *I Have No Mouth* looks to draw the player into a recondite world of intrigue in what the developers describe as a "nightmarish adventure of post-apocalyptic survival deep in the bowels of an omniscient computer that fills the centre of the Earth."

No one can question the calibre of Ellison's vivid and macabre story-telling ability, and it would appear that many of Ellison's 58 books and 1300 short stories are ripe for conversion onto the interactive movie format. Whether they are "gored-up" for release on the PC in a blaze of publicity remains to be seen. *I Have No Mouth, And I Must Scream* will be available in Spring '95. Contact Cyberdreams on 071 328-3267.



Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller

(Gametek)

With the likes of actor Dennis Hopper, actor/singer Grace Jones and super-model Stephanie Seymour on board, *Hell: A Cyberpunk Thriller* is sure to be released amidst a positive inferno of publicity early next year.

Again, rather dark than gratuitously gory, though looking quite fantastic, it puts the player in a futuristic world where The Hand of God party controls Washington and the gates of Hell have just opened. The player must control one of two characters, former investigators for the government, now fugitives wanted for sins against the state.

Using lavish 3D-rendered graphics, animation and full-motion video footage, the game transforms the player to a world of fiery torture where they must do battle with ruthless evil. Although the subject matter is undeniably unsuitable for children, like so many other new releases, *Hell* may run into trouble with the censors over its video sequences which can be subject to classification, forcing it into a higher bracket than otherwise expected. We shall see. Contact Gametek on 0753 553 445.



Grace Jones, seen here strutting her stuff in *Vamp*, is also stamping her unique acting style on Gametek's new production.

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HH, THE to and fro, the ebb and flow, the highs and lows of the games-playing tips world. One month it looks like the TruePlayer's assault on the backside of the gaming fraternity will be victorious. Their onslaughts of complete solutions, cryptic hints, and tips looked close to overwhelming the HackMasters™ and their hacks, cracks, and cheats. It's gone on too long... we can't take anymore... that's it... Troubleshooter is the slightly crack-upped mediator of this conflict.

BACK UP

Most, if not all, of the hacks on this page will require changing actual game files (mainly savegame files, peppered with the odd main .EXE file). It is then sensible to back up the file specified in the hack. To do this, simply enter the directory containing the file, say for example SAVEGAME.SAV, and back it up thus:

```
COPY SAVEGAME.SAV SAVEGAME.BAK
```

If you make a bad mistake and start crying and all, then restore files by typing:

```
COPY SAVEGAME.BAK SAVEGAME.SAV
```

HEXADECIMAL

Your PC counts strangely. In hexadecimal (base 16). We count in decimal (base 10). For the HackMaster's experience you only really need to learn a few choice hex numbers (see table below).

WHAT YOU NEED

There are three things every HackMaster™ groupie must have (well, at least one of them).

①. **DEBUG** Free with dos is a program called Debug. A very useful program it is too, since it allows you to edit files of all descriptions and subtly change the data therein. It is the program we use most in the Hackmaster Zone™, and since it is the most user-unfriendly program on this planet, a brief introduction/explanation is necessary. Here's a step-by-step guide to a Debug hack:

To run it just type DEBUG in the appropriate directory (i.e. the one mentioned in the hack blurb). It should run automatically and produce a little '>' prompt. If you get a "file not found" style error then your dos path hasn't been set properly. Refer to the MS-DOS manual and remember the

HEX	DECIMAL
09H	09
0AH	10
0FH	15
10H	16
20H	32
28H	40
32H	50
40H	64
63H	99
64H	100
C8H	200
FAH	250
FFH	255

bottom line – don't ring us (no matter how desperate unless it's TruePlayer™ Tips day).

```
1 >BASE.DAT <return>
```

Now, once you have a little '>' prompt you should type in the commands listed in the program, starting with the line above the "N" command. This tells Debug which program is to be hacked. There should be no space between the "N" and the full filename.

```
2 >L <return>
```

This command actually loads the file you've just specified into memory and into the hands of the hacker.

```
3 >E 0100 v <return>
```

This is the Edit function. Simply type is as it appears above, i.e. with a space between the "E" and the address (9CBE) and the "v". The "v" stands for a value you will enter yourself, ranging between 00 and FF (0 to 255 decimal).

```
4 >e0124 67 03 50 50
```

If the edit command looks something like this (i.e. a long list of numbers), then press RETURN after the address (the first four-digit code) and Debug will repeat your command (see below). Then simply type in the values which follow (90, 90 etc.) pressing SPACE between each one, except the last when you should press RETURN. So basically, the command should be enacted thus (with what you must type shown in red):

```
>E 0124<Return>
```

```
21FB:0124 FE.67 <space> 0E.03 <space> D1.50  
<space> 9D.50 <return>
```

```
>
```

```
5 >W <return>
```

This command writes the hacked file back onto the disk. A message saying "writing xxxxx bytes" will appear, where xxxxx is the size of the file (it varies). Nothing has been changed on your hard disk until you type this command. So if you've made a mistake earlier just quit Debug and start the process again.

```
6 >Q <return>
```

This quits you back to dos.

② A DISK SECTOR EDITOR

Another useful bit of kit is a Disk Sector Editor, such as XTree Gold or PC Tools. If you own one, then you'll know how to use it – but it is important to note that the offset (or address) in a debug hack is for Debug which automatically adds 256 bytes (or 100 hex) to the address. So, if you prefer to use your editor, and a separate disk editor hack isn't included, then you just have to deduct 100 hex from the address. So if an address is 0141 on the page then your address will be 0041. It's a simple case of deducting one from the second figure on the left. If in doubt, use Debug.

③ UNP

This is a highly useful shareware utility by Ben Castrichum. You'll find UNP on this month's cover disk

ER

and CD. Many games these days have compressed .EXE files, making debuggery and sector editing impossible. Until now. To UNPack a file, just type:

```
UNP <filename>
```

This will expand the .EXE file to its proper size, leaving it wide open and vulnerable to hack attacks. It causes no damage to files (and besides, you will have backed them up right?). Full instructions are included with each hack which requires UNP.

4. TRAINERS

"Huh? What are trainers?" you could be wondering at this juncture. Well, "trainers" are basically custom-designed TSRs which run behind a given game (let's say Zool II) and either a) constantly plump up your health and ammo; or b) give you a special hot-key to press when you want your health and ammo plumped up. Due to the extensive hacking skills of one of our archest of arch HackMasters, Johnathon Mell, we now have the opportunity to produce a regular batch of, say, five trainers per month for you to experiment with.

The one big advantage with trainers is that they don't actually modify any bits of your game. There's no need to back up any files, and no need to get any hex numbers exactly right. You just run the trainer and that's it. You'll find more details of this month's trainers on the cover-disk page. Enjoy.

THE BOTTOM LINE

If you get into trouble ring us on
True-Player™ Tips day
(Wednesday 2pm to 6pm) for
free tips support.

These hacks are copyright of Felden Productions 1994. If you try and pass them off as your own to another magazine, we'll get you, we will.

PC Zone and Dennis Publishing take no responsibility for alleged hardware or software damage caused by direct or indirect use of the HackMasters™ hacks and cracks. If the chances of damage were higher than 0.0000001% then we wouldn't be printing them. Make sure you follow the instructions and nothing can happen.

BATTLE ISLE II (Blue Byte)

This surprisingly addictive think 'em up has more than its fair share of "conundrums" and "gold runs" to offer the average strategy fan. To wit, Robert Lane's vast spread (well, 20) of level codes.

LEVEL CODE

1	AMPORGE
2	JOGRWAI
3	QEGIDOS
4	WABODAE
5	BUTASWE
6	GEFAUWA
7	OLARIBU
8	FITORGE
9	DAFATWA
10	WABIKDO
11	GEEUSAT
12	KAIMAWA
13	SIETIBU
14	GEDEFOM
15	ULUARGE
16	ABUNDWA
17	LANADGE
18	WAFEPAL
19	BUSALUG
20	GEKEFZU

ELITE II (Gametek)

Unaware of our seminal hack eons ago, C.D. Williams has sent in his "first" hack for Elite. It's a nice little Debug refrain which reduces the weight of all upgrades to

nothing, making long-range military missions ease-o-la. Almost as ease-o-la as the method to get it working.

- 1) Back up the file EL2M12.OVL
- 2) Use UNP on EL2M12.OVL
- 3) Debug
- 4) Change all these offsets to 00:

```
04D5, 04E1, 04ED, 04F9, 0505,
0511, 051D, 0529, 0535, 0541,
054D, 0559, 0565, 0571, 057D,
0589, 0595, 05A1, 05AD, 05B9,
05C5, 05D1, 05DD, 05E9, 05F5,
0601, 060D, 0619, 0625, 0631,
063D, 0649, 0655, 0661, 066D,
0679, 0685, 0691, 06A9, 06B5,
06C1, 06CD, 06D9, 06DA, 06E5,
06E6.
```

So basically you just nip into Debug and type:

```
>HEL2M12.OVL
>L
>E 04D5 00      1st address
>E 04E1 00      2nd
address
and so on, until...
>E 06E5 00      45th
address
>E 06E6 00      46th
address
>W
>Q
```

Become Elite status in five whole minutes with our Frontier cheat. As tested by our own Elite-bore, Ensign Burgess.

PROFILE FOR COMMANDER BURGESS

MILITARY STANDING

Federal Rank: Sergeant-Major
Imperial Title: Outsider
Elite Rating: ELITE

LEGAL STATUS

Federal: Clean
Imperial: Clean
Interpol: Clean

FEDERAL CRIMINAL RECORD

Unlawful discharge of weapon
Trading in illegal goods
Smuggling illegal goods

MEDALS AND PERMITS

Certificate of Valour
Starburst
Ross 128 Prison Permit
Guardian's Permit



TROUBLESHOOTER

The TruePlayers

Or, alternatively, you can use our new found cheat for instant *Elite* status. We're not sure exactly how this one got through David Braben's five year "playtesting" stint. Try this:

- 1) Get the Mining Laser.
- 2) Go to Mars High and refuel.
- 3) Go to Phobos.
- 4) Stop half a kilometre from the surface.
- 5) Fire continuously at the planet.
- 6) Stick time advance on 100.
- 7) After a few seconds, a message will say: "Well Done Commander!" and you'll go up a rank.
- 8) Repeat from step 5 and you'll be *Elite* in about five minutes.

CANNON FODDER (Virgin)

Bit late on this one were the HackMasters™. Absence of a boxed copy thwarted our early attempt to render this natty little *Syndicate*-type thing into its component parts. We were saved, however, by the combined might of HackMaster Infantas, Keith Brosnan, Sam Margaron, and our ever-weird Italian cousin, Aldo Corbellini.

First up is a quick *Debug* save thing. Save your game and back up the file *CHEAT.CF*. Then debug:

```

>ECHEAT.CF
>L
>E 0100 v      v=phase number (0-
47)
>E 010C v      v=mission number
(0-32)
>E 0112 50     max volunteers
>E 0140 0F     Troop 1 = general
>E 014C 0F     Troop 2 = general
>E 0158 0F     Troop 3 = general
>W

```

Or, for owners of *PC Tools* and *XTGold*, back up *CANNON.EXE* and then UNP it. For infinite recruits:

```

FIED:      29 06 C2 6B
CHANGE TO: 90 90 90 90

```

RAPTOR (Apogee)

Star of our cover disk, and also star of the shareware shoot 'em up, *Raptor* has been hacked solid by our ever-present Italian "chum" Aldo Corbellini. Play the game as per, back up *CHAR0001.FIL* as *CHAR0001.BAK* and then debug:

```

>HCHAR0001.FIL
>L
>E 0124 67 03 50 50
>W
>Q

```



Win! Win! Win! With one flick of our mega UFO hack-o-la, you'll be win, win, winning in minutes. (Cheat, cheat, cheating more like - Ed)

This should give you a phenomenally large amount of money, but don't be confused by negative numbers - you really do have more money than you can ever possibly spend.

UFO (MicroProse)

More hacks for this unsung, fairly original game. William Burton has been cordially offered the rank of HackMaster Adolescenta for his handy little hack. The premise is simple. Start a new game, save it in slot one. Quit, enter your save directory and back up *BASE.DAT*. debug:

```

>NBASE.DAT
>L
>E 0116 08 0F 10 11 0D 02 02 02
>E 011E 12 13 02 02 03 03 00 03
>E 0126 03 03 07 07 07 07 0A 0C
>E 012E 10 11 01 0A 10 11 12 13
>E 0136 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
>E 013E 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
>E 0146 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
>E 014E 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
>E 0156 00 00 00 00 00 00 00
>W
>Q

```

Reload your save game and purchase 22 soldiers. Save your game again and quit out. Re-enter the save directory and debug with:

```

>NBASE.DAT
>L
>E 0130 0A
>E 015E FA FA
>W
>Q

```

Make more of these sizeable conflagrations with our UFO arms hack.



You should now have a rather yomming base.

CORRIDOR 7 (Gametek)

"Prepare to meet thy Doom," says the advertising blurb for this sub-standard sub-Wolfenstein 3D shooter. Hah, we say, hah. Give us a break. *Corridor 7* is to *Doom* what Belinda Carlisle is to rugby. However, full marks to the programmers for including a swathe of obvious cheat-modes in the full registered version of the game.

1) In game, press and hold down "WAX" for full ammo, guns and visors.

2) For a fully randomized level, run the game with:
c7 president

3) To play a slightly enhanced game, run with:
c7 Level1 diagnostic

Now, in game, hold CTRL+LSHIFT+TAB and then type:

```

BKSP+Wwarp to next level
BKSP+GGod mode on/off
BKSP+NNo clipping on/off
BKSP+RShull face
BKSP+IIncrease score
BKSP+FCo-ords
BKSP+CStats

```

THEME PARK (Electronic Arts)

Just enough time for us to slip in this simple yet magnificent *Debug* hack for the big-selling *Theme Park* Bullfrog/EA experience from Andy Hayton.

Start a new game with the name, let's say, "cheat". Borrow as much money as possible from the bank, save the game as slot 0, and quit out. Enter the save directory and debug:

```

>N Cheat. 60
>L
>E 0112 00 00 00 00 00 00
>W
>Q

```

Reload the game and your loan will have been written off. Lovely.

ARENA: THE ELDER SCROLLS

Not a very popular game by all accounts, but nevertheless, the TruePlayers Tips Line of Tips Line has been absolutely choka-o-la with calls. "What are the answers to the riddles?" they ask. "What, er, is the best character?" they continue. "Why did I buy this game?" is another common query. Well, wonder, muse, and ponder no longer. Here is **Praban Palle** and the TruePlayers labs with the full show-down on the land of Kashiythainallamore (or whatever the Arena "Middle Earth" place is called).

GENERAL HINTS AND TIPS

THE BATTLEMAGE is the best character to start with. It's all a matter of opinion of course, but, as any elf will tell you, it's good to have the best of both worlds. In this case, fighting and spell casting. As for race, the best choice is Khajiit. They're quick and agile and climb things quickly, making dungeons and swimming much easier. One problem though - they're dreadfully weak to start off with. Their armour and shield selection is poor, and they're not allowed to wear higher level armour and shield artifacts. The simple remedy for this is a shield spell (especially for the higher level BattleMages). This should give you protection and more space in your inventory, simultaneously.

This protection issue is counteracted by their initial weapon selection and their use of the Ebony Blade (the best artifact, found much later). Also, the maximum 175 spell points should give you more than enough offensive power to topple the majority of your opponents.

HAVE AXE, WILL SLAY

Check the date when you first appear in the starter dungeon. It should be around the 3rd of Hearthfire (Winter to us mere mortals). Arrive in the town during daylight on the same date (a Tales & Tallow holiday) and all the kit at the Mage's Guild will be half price. If you slaughtered everything in the starter dungeon you should be around 4th level by now.

Head for the nearest equipment store and sell everything but your best weapon. You should have found the Longsword of Firestorm. Sell that for 18750 (0.n.o.) and it'll set it up big time. Go to the Mage's Guild and buy ten potions of Heal True

(avoid normal Heal - it's not worth it), Restore Power and Free Action, as well as five potions of Purification. Buy the Stock Light spell. Now you can use the Spellmaker.

SPELLMAKING

Generally speaking, spells are cheaper to cast and are more powerful if their power/strength is based on your character's level. Create a shield spell that gives one point protection plus five or ten points additional per level (depends on casting cost). Next, create what will be one of the handiest spells in your grimoire - it's a nasty, destructive little ditty. The recipe goes as follows:

Target	Centred on Caster,
Effect	Damage to Health,

Argland, the local breast-plate vendor, shows off another happy customer.

Range	1 to 1 plus at
least 5 to 5 per level and	
Save	VS Fire

The spell (call it what you want, something like Armageddon) will put down Trolls without effort. It's best used when you are blocked by a monster when swimming or in a chasm. Because you don't need to see the monsters, it'll go through walls and doors - it's a great all-purpose, all-round spell, especially when you get jumped by more than one monster. In the meantime, if you have the cash, create a Fireball spell - and, optionally, an Iceball spell. If you've still got lolly to spare (if you still have cash left), you might want to buy a Mark or Ring of Firestorm or Paralyze. It's definitely a good idea to buy more Heal True, Restore Power, Free Action and Purify potions.

EQUIPMENT

Now, shop the equipment stores and see if you can find a good sword (Dwarven, Adamantium, etc.) and maybe pick up a long bow and some leathers (oo-er). Now you have a decision to face - you can do one of two things: start going for the Ogham Infinitum quest (see Artifacts) or do some

Johanna Khes		RACE: 0	
Wood Elf		HEALTH: 12	
Mage		FATIGUE: 113	
LEVEL: 1			
STR 57	DAMAGE +0	MAX KGS 85	
INT 54	SP PTS 8	TO HIT +0	
WIL 57	MAG DEF -1	TO DEF -2	
AGI 62	TO HIT +2		
SPD 72	HEALTH +0	HEAL MOD +7	
END 56	CHARISMA +0		
PER 49	BONUS PTS 0		
LUC 46			
FIRE +0	POISON +2	MAGIC +1	
COLD +0	SHOCK +0		
DONE			



stats and cash building by tackling a few local dungeons.

Anyway, you want to start doing on quests (Narsis in Morrowood is a good place to get them). Max your Endurance first, this gives you additional HP bonus at each level advance and a BM needs high hit points. Next, max out your AGI, SPD, STR, INT and WIL. Fetch the Ebony Blade while you're developing and then get the quest for Auriel's Bow. Put the Blade and Bow in for repair and go for the Necromancer's Amulet. Once you have those three artifacts you are ready for the Staff Quests.

STAFF QUESTS

By now you should be at level nine or ten, and well equipped for the First Staff piece. Throughout this early stage you should be building up your stockpile of Heal True, Restore Power, Free Action and Purify. When you start to do the Staff Quests, you'll find that Resist Fire, Levitate and Invisibility are handy. Resist Fire is good to gulp down right before you go into the final room for the 1st Staff piece. You should also delete the "Burst" and "Shield" spells and create higher power versions of them.

The quests for the remaining seven Staff pieces will put you up against a lot of spell casting monsters. Oh dear. You need to use the SpellMaker to make yourself the Spell of All Spells - a spell reflection spell. Set it's range to one per cent and nine per cent per level so you will reflect back spells at least 80 to 90 per cent of the time at level nine or ten. Duration should be the same as your "Light" spell. This will give you advance warning of your reflection spell's expiry when the light goes off (if you cast them simultaneously). As you advance in levels, create another spell that's even better - a Spell Absorption spell. Nice. About half the spells thrown at you will replenish your spell points and the rest bounce back and fry the caster. Remember, as you advance in levels, keep going back to Spellmaker and redo your spells for greater power or longer durations.

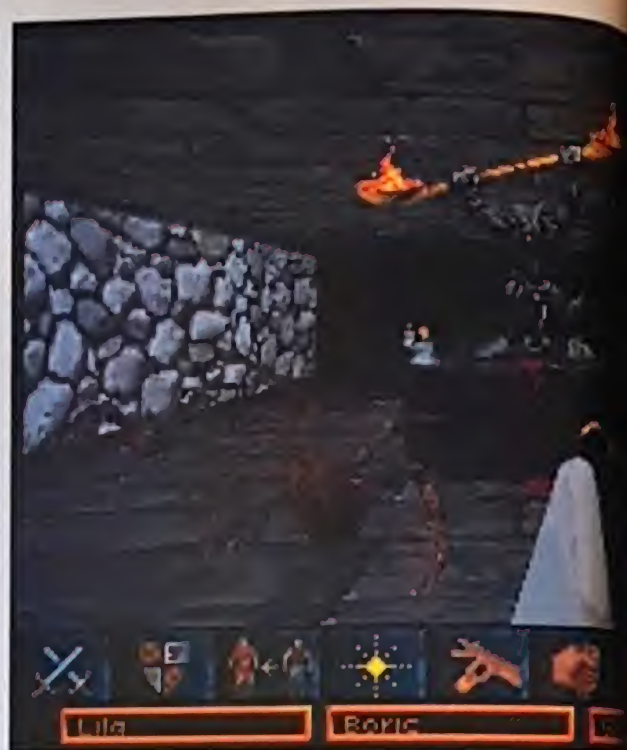
Imaginative use of other spells can reap great rewards. Slow Death has continuous damage and poison. Cast it, stand back and watch 'em eventually keel over. Force Bolt is

cool and great to use on monsters that "disappear" when dead. Get Paralyze (100 per cent) with large damage to health as this often "freezes" them at the moment of death, leaving their bodies ripe for plundering.

Another neat trick with Spell Absorption is to stand close to a wall or monsters and cast something like Fireball. You'll absorb the points back from your own spell (but watch it - only do this with 100 per cent spell absorption or you'll be fried).

RIDDLE ANSWERS

Despite gameplay to the contrary, Arena's Staff quest is totally linear. To obtain staff pieces, you need to find the two dungeons



Staff Piece #:	Location	Riddle Answer(s)
pre-1st	StoneKeep	-none-
1st	Fang Lair	Glove
pre-2nd	Fortress of Ice	Wind -or- Air
2nd	Labyrinthian	Nothing, Hourglass, Key
pre-3rd	Selene's Web	-none-
3rd	Elden Grove	Time, Footstep
pre-4th	Temple of Agamanus	Sun
4th	Halls of Colossus	heodorus, 108
pre-5th	Temple of the Mad God	Torch -or- Match
5th	Crystal Tower	Egg
pre-6th	Mines of Khuras	Onion
6th	Crypt of Hearts	Shadow
pre-7th	Vaults of Gemin	-none-
7th	Murkwood	Love, Water
pre-8th	Black Gate	Rain
8th	Dagoth-Ur	E

(Top left). Something's fishy in the heart of Arena.
(Above right) Oh no - spiders.
GIRLS: "Eeeekkk! Get rid of it. Get rid of it."
BOYS: "Don't worry I'll save you."
GIRLS: "Oh, don't kill them."
BOYS: "Where are they?"
GIRLS: "Here! Here!"
BOYS: "I'll get those..." (sees large arachnids pouring across the floor)... catchuz later.
(Below) Behold! Arena's multi-faceted panoramic weather effects (i.e. snow).



SEND! SEND! SEND!

£50 FOR EVERY SOLUTION PRINTED
A FREE GAME FOR EVERY HACK

Send all your contributions, be they hacks, maps, or solutions, to David McCandless, *TroubleShooter*, PC Zone, 19 Bolsover Street, London, W1P 7HJ. Please, please, please remember to send any lengthy solutions on disk (if you want your disk returned, send an SAE). Also, if you've drawn any maps in an art package, such as CorelDraw, send those too.

**TROUBLESHOOTER,
PC ZONE, 19 BOLSOVER
STREET,
LONDON W1P 7HJ**

AURIEL'S BOW: This is an Elven Longbow (long groan), however, instead of an arrow the Elven fires a not-terribly-impressive "magic bolt".

CHRYSAMERE: A yomming claymore which shields against spells, including Resist Fire. Again, not really that hot.

YOLENDUNG: A Dwarven War Hammer (double groan) which is most powerful, but disappears very quickly, even under the strain of domestic use.

STAFF OF MAGNUS: Again, pretty useless. It gives you Spell Absorption and Regeneration, but doesn't even come close to the power of the Necromancer's Amulet.

AURIEL'S SHIELD: Now this is very impressive with three main uses. Firstly, a very strong shield resisting until it absorbs a maximum of hit points; secondly, spell reflection; and thirdly, fire resistance. It only lasts for about five times, but it should prove adequate protection through a big, tough dungeon.

SPELLBREAKER: A Dwarven Tower Shield with Spell Resistance. Not as impressive as Auriel's.

LORD'S MAIL: A plate mail Cuirass with Spell Resistance, Regeneration, and Anti-poison. Lasts for about 20 times.

EBONY MAIL: Similar to the Lord's Mail

"Alright mate. Sell ya some potions? Some ointments? A couple of elixirs?"



only it's made out of Ebony and has added Fire Resistance. Yawn.

WARLOCK'S RING: Gives pleasant effects including Spell Reflection. Heal and a large Speed boost. Lasts for about 10 times.

KHAJITT RING: Wear this for Sanctuary and Invisibility.

PHYNASTER'S RING: Not bad - this endows the wearer with Shock, Poison and Spell Resistance.

NECROMANCER'S AMULET: This is just perfect for mages who need a boost to Intelligence, some Spell Resistance and quick Regeneration of hit points.

SKELETON KEY: This can only be used once a day. It will open some riddle doors for you, as well as any "non-magically" locked doors.

KING ORGNUM'S COFFER: Again, this can only be used once per day. Yields between 15 and 100 gold pieces per use. Avoid it, it weighs a ton and you can get more gold out of monsters massacres.

OGHMA INFINIUM: This little beauty endows you with 50 points of Attribute bonuses. Very useful indeed.

ARTIFACT CHEATS

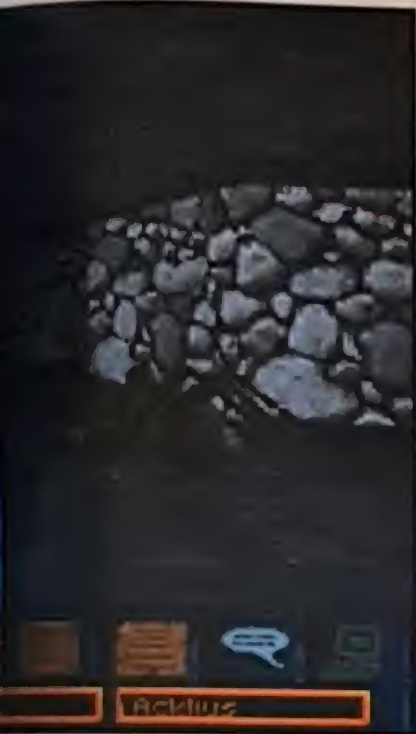
❶ The game was designed to prevent you from getting a quest for an Artifact while possessing one. However, this can be craftily dodged by putting the Artifact in for Repair.

❷ The Artifacts were originally to have limited Uses, but use your Artifact at least once before repairing it, and it will be returned with a restored amount of Uses.

❸ When repairing, offer to pay 99 gold for the Repair work. The Artifact will then be ready in ten days (i.e. 240 hours), regardless of what you are told.

❹ Artifact quests can be received/completed more than once; this is parti-

Out in the sunny surrounds of a city, a sneaky side step sends you sprawling into some subteranean cesspool (Oh we are clever aren't we - Ed).



(a preliminary and final location) associated with each piece, and two riddles that are associated with the dungeons.

NICE THINGS

There are plenty of extremely nice things to be abducted from various locales in the arena. And here they are.

EBONY BLADE: Basically an Ebony Katana with automatic Lifesteal associated with it. Can also cast a Lifesteal, but this wears the sword out very quickly. Could be the best weapon in the game



SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO: BITS & PCs, PC ZONE, 19 BOLSOVER ST. LONDON W1P 7HJ



of PC owning with Mark Burgess.

Wipe out your hard disk, set up a Bulletin Board or networked Doom and find out what a burst rate is. All the thrills and spills

New boots

I'M HAVING a slight problem with the start-up on my computer. It is an IBM PS-1 (486SX-25), 4MB RAM, Sound Blaster card and Canon BJ-105K. I had run Double Space and was using it quite happily until some games I tried wouldn't work due to the lack of base memory (Ultima 7, your Cannon Fodder demo).

Using the `msys` command I realised Double Space was using a large chunk of my memory, even if I tried to load it high. After writing to an Internet newsgroup at my university, it seemed that I had to format my hard drive to get rid of Double Space. I prepared a boot, format C:, and everything is gone.

Using the `rs11` recovery disks, I got my system back to normal - nearly. When trying to boot up from my hard drive I get a "non-system or disk error - replace and strike a key". This message is not in the manual. The hard drive contains exactly the same five files you need (`IO.SYS`, `MSDOS.SYS`, `COMMAND.COM`, `AUTOEXEC.BAT`, `CONFIG.SYS`) - why will it not work?

There are no serious problems - but I have to boot from the disk every time and it is slightly slower than booting from the hard disk.

Steven Brown, Lenzies, Glasgow

Re-formatting a hard drive is a drastic way to get rid of Double Space. As to your problem, you can't treat the hard disk as a system disk. You must set an active DOS partition using `FDISK` before you use the `format` command. Run `FDISK` and choose the first option ("Create DOS Partition or Logical DOS Drive"). You can then make the whole drive one large partition - this is the normal way - or else subdivide the disk. If you choose the latter, then you must set the active partition, again using `FDISK`. The whole procedure is very simple, but it will wipe everything that's on your hard drive, so make sure you back up all your files. MB

Board agenda

I RATE PC Zone as the best computer magazine around and so I decided to ask you, the experts, about my query. Recently I have been thinking about setting up a bulletin board and I would like to know how to go about doing so. I know I will need a modem, but what I don't know is what

programs I will need and how to set the lot up. Maybe you might think of devoting part of the Off the Boards section to BBSs.

I have a Dell Dimension 486DX 33MHz computer with 4MB RAM and an 80MB hard drive. As of now I don't have a modem, but I intend to purchase one in the very near future. Could you tell me what modem would be best for the job and roughly how much it would cost.

One thing that totally gets on my nerves is when you are asked to enter codes before you start a game or in the middle of a game. Now get me right, I disagree totally with software pirates even though I once was one myself (shame!), but I was wondering how to go about getting rid of the code.

John O'Connor, Ashford, Co Wicklow, Ireland

PS I use Double Space (Aaaaahhhhh!).

PPS I will soon be upgrading to a 486DX2 6MHz.

PPPS Please, please publish my letter and if possible send me one of the many free games that you get from software houses.

There are quite a few Shareware programs for Bulletin Boards. Powerboard BBS from NulQ is the heavyweight - the last version I saw came on six disks - but the publishers reckon you can get it up and running in six minutes. Maybe. You might find that Powerboard has more features than you need. I like PowerBBS for Windows which has full fax/data line detection. It will use a fax line as the BBS and run the whole thing in background, so that you don't have to dedicate a computer to the BBS.

Sapphire BBS is a popular package. Version 4.09 is out now. Businesses like it because you can get the system up and running almost immediately. Contact Pinnacle Software on CID 70154,1577. Another old favourite is Omega by Larry Lolselle. This is now version 7.50 and Larry's CID is 70242,761.

Two other programs I've seen but never used are MutantBBS and Grapevine.

All these programs are shareware and available on Compuserve. You might as well try them all and register the one you want to stay with.

You do need a modem (you also need a much bigger hard drive if you're going to run a BBS).

Recommending a modem is really difficult. We use a US Robotics Courier HST Dual which is a lovely bit of kit and would cost about £750. The Tricom Tornado is supposed to be a dream machine and costs a fair bit less, at about £580. There was a massive test of 36 modems in issue 74 of Computer Shopper (April 1994) so try and get hold of a copy.

I did a feature on going on-line in issue 7. If there's enough interest, I'll do a survey of BBS. So, if you run a BBS let me know what it does, the protocol and where I can browse through it.

It would be suicide for this magazine to give any hints on getting round copy protection, even if we knew any, which we don't. Copy protection is there because users

can't be trusted without it. How many of you out there have got the full version of Doom? Okay. Now how many of you paid for it? See? MB

Bursting for it

I AM PLANNING to buy a CD-ROM drive within the next few months and went to a local computer specialist shop to see what was available.

The shop assistant showed me a Panasonic CD-ROM which had fast access and transfer rates, but what puzzled me was when the assistant said that it had a 2MB "burst rate". However, the assistant couldn't tell me what a "burst rate" was.

Being rather new to the world of PCs, could you please tell me what the heck is "burst rate" and is 2MB any good? Also, is it connected with memory, since I have a 4MB 486SX25, and most games now require 4MB to run.

I hope that you can solve this enigma for me, and if I had one wish it would be for specialist shops to teach their staff the meaning of technical terms before spouting them to their customers.

Keep up the excellent work

David Hodder, Cwmbron, Gwent

It means nothing. It is an optimistic measure of the fastest a CD-ROM drive could transfer data in ideal conditions. It's a lot like the "cps" (characters per second) figure quoted for printers. This isn't a measure of how fast the machine can print a letter. They just set up the printer and get it to print the simplest character (e.g. ".") and time that. What is important about a CD-ROM drive is the sustained transfer rate. Get one with a transfer rate of at least 300 kb/s, which is MPC level II. You should get a good one for about £150. Try the Panasonic 562-B or the Philips CM206 - both of which have 8-bit interfaces, or the Orchid CDS3110 and Mitsumi FX001D, both of which have 16-bit interfaces. The latter two are faster (all other things being equal).

The majority of shop assistants are only concerned with their commission and don't give a damn whether you get what you need or want. They are also ignorant and there seems to be nothing you can do about it, MB

The Waiting Game

I NEED some help. I am an ageing, balding, wargamer turned computer gamer, (can't get anyone to play with me anymore), and with a big tear in my anorak because I have no money (wife, four kids, mortgage and wife's shoe fetish to support).

I am currently the proud owner of a 386 DX with 4MB RAM and 86MB hard drive, a crappy old sound card and a very dodgy graphics card (the screen keeps blurring and changes colour every so often). All in all I am very happy with it, I've had hours of fun playing *Underworld 2*, *Fields of Glory* and *X-Wing*. But my heart sinks when I read the pages of your magazine - more and more games need high spec machines. I did not buy Doom as it needs more get up and go than my machine has.

How would I plan for the future? It seems to me I can either save up all my pennies and buy the mega gamers machine, around June 2044, or upgrade my current one bit by bit. I am wondering if an extra 4MB of RAM would be best to kick off with (the dodgy graphics card I can live with). When will I need to buy a CD-ROM? That only seems a matter of time. Or should I go all out and buy a whole new motherboard, and if so what speed of 486 can I get away with?

Can you please help? I can maybe make one upgrade or so, a year, depending on cost.

Keep up the good work. In spite of all the new PC gaming magazines on the market, yours is still the only one with well written and informative reviews that actually tell me about the games rather than just describing them. It's also a bit funny sometimes.

Kim Hamilton, Watford, Herts

I know just how you feel. I, too, have a 386DX. And a "significant other" who makes Imelda Marcos look like the barefoot countess. And a "prominent crown". Anyway.

Like anyone with a 386 you are deferring the day when you finally upgrade to a 486 of some sort. A 486 is fast and expandable. They are even becoming relatively cheap: you can get one for less than a grand - that's about 14 pairs of shoes. If you go for a motherboard only you're looking at the equivalent of about six pairs of Russell and Bromley's finest.

The way to get a new computer past your wife is to load a package like As Easy As (shareware) and produce a footwear database. Graph leather/patent/suede shoe types against heel length and LDW (Last Date Worn). Let me know if it works.

In the meantime there are various things you can do to your 386 that will delay the day you have to upgrade. Let's look at the processor first. Cyrix produce a chip called the 486DLC. This clips on top of a 386DX and has an instruction set compatible with a 486SX. A few words of warning: first the 386DX must be Intel or AMD. Second, there should be about two inches of space free above the 386DX chip (it's about 1.5" square and will be labelled "386DX"). This is because the Cyrix needs a heat sink. Third, you should have a socket for a 387 Maths co-processor (you may even have one fitted). And that's just about it. Your computer should run about 50 per cent faster for no more than £200. The price of three pairs of patent leather pumps.

Next, memory: you can never have enough. An extra 4Mb will speed up your system. It should cost about the same as two pairs of shoes - say £120. Your other problem is the hard drive which is a bit on the small side. Try and pick up one of about 210Mb to use as a slave drive. Cost? Around £150.

Now, the bad news is that in not buying a new motherboard (about £300) you've spent nearly £500. It's up to you and your bank manager, I guess. Oh, and the wife. MB

PS You can run Doom on a 386DX but it's slow and in a minute window.

Doom and networks

JUST RECENTLY I have started attempting to play multi-player Doom on a small network. So far I have

managed to get three fast computers working quite well together. When the game first loads, the game is very fast, especially on small levels. However, as time goes on (and as frags go up), the game becomes more "sluggish" - just as many frames are being drawn, but at a slower rate (it doesn't get jerky). When a level is finished, it stays slow. When you save the game, quit, reboot, and then reload the game, it is back up to a frantic pace until it slows down again. Can you explain this, and if so, can you solve it?

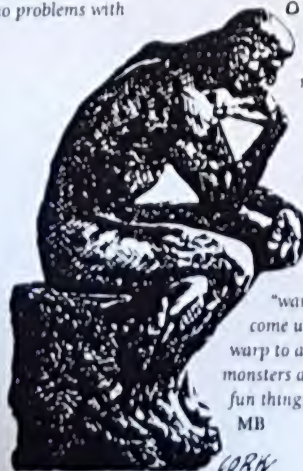
The three machines consist of two DX2s and a 486DX 33. One computer has 8MB RAM and the other two have 4MB. They all have Longshine NE2000 compatible network cards, and are connected by ethernet cables. I use drivers supplied with the cards to get IPX protocol. All the machines do a clean boot before playing Doom. Also, if it helps, two of the machines have Windows for Workgroups 3.11 installed on their hard disks.

I hope that some of this information is useful in working out what is happening. If it is the IPX drivers, could you please tell me where to get some more sophisticated ones, or if it is the boot up config, please suggest a better one. When I went to the Computer Shopper Show in Birmingham recently, they played four-player Doom on DX 33s and the game was continually smooth. Do you know what drivers/config/hardware etc. they had?

Simon Green, Bristol

PS Do you know if you can use the nomonsters switch on multi-player Doom?

It could be that your network drivers are loaded low, but the obvious problem is that you are playing with only 4Mb RAM. The slowdown is due to the disk access for a huge swap file. If you get all the machines up to 8Mb, I reckon your problems will be over. At the Birmingham Shopper Show we used DEC 8-bit cards with proprietary drivers connected to an IPX ethernet network with a hub. We had no problems with



Doom, but you might have noticed that Falcon struggled a bit.

To turn off monsters in networked Doom, hit F5 at setup and then type

"warp". A screen will come up with options to warp to any level, turn off monsters and all sorts of fun things.

MB

What is it with... Processor numbers?

The new column of Bits & PCs that covers everything you wanted to know but never got round to asking

The processor is at the coal face of your PC. Not so long ago it was easy to guess their age and power. They were numbered in sequence. You could tell that a 80286 was more recent/powerful than an 8086. But what about SLC or DLC? Where do they fit in? And what about the SX/2? Is that as good as a DX?

The first real PC, IBM's XT, used an Intel 8086 chip. This was a 16-bit processor that could address 1Mb of memory or devices. To retain backwards compatibility, every PC has the 8086 instruction code as a subset of its own. The 8088 was basically the same but used 8-bit instructions (8-bit components are cheaper). There was an 80186 which was essentially the same as the old 8086.

Now we get on to numbers you've heard about. The 80286 is a 16-bit chip that can address 16Mb and has a maths co-processor, the 80287 for floating point arithmetic. A quick word about maths co-processors. They will not necessarily speed up your computer but will speed up applications that use lots of mathematical operations and are designed to use them. The special feature of the 80286 is that it can run in real mode (like an 8086 but faster) or protected mode which enables access to extended and virtual memory and adds multi-tasking and protection (it can run more than one program at the same time without cross-interference).

The 80386DX can use and address 32-bits. Programs can run in virtual 86 mode where each program runs as if on its own 8086 but much faster. The 386 has its maths co-processor, the 80387. A 80386SX is a 386DX internally but can accept instructions from 16-bit (cheaper) components. This slows it down, but where programming is concerned, it's the same chip inside. A 80386SL is a specially designed 80386SX for laptop computers.

Now the 486. The 80486 is like the 80386 except that it is faster (at the same clock speed) and has a maths co-processor and a cache built in. The cache is a bit of high-speed memory that cuts the time it takes the processor to access instructions and data. A 80486SX is a 80486DX with the co-processor and cache zapped out. If you buy a 80487 it isn't a co-processor - it's a full 80486DX and the computer then ignores your 486SX.

If you see a number after the "X" it means that the chip processes instructions "n" times faster than it accepts them. So a 80486DX2 is twice as fast internally as a 80486DX. All the chips we've dealt with so far are made by Intel. Now things get confusing. The 486SLC from IBM is logically the same as a 486SX - it has a cache controller (but no maths co-processor) - and fits on a 386DX circuit board. So it's a fast 386DX or a slow 486SX. The 486DLC is from Cyrix and is like IBM's 486SLC except that it has a maths co-processor. This means that a 486DLC at 33MHz should be as fast as a 80486SX at 25MHz.

Intel have realised that you can't patent numbers and so their latest - the 80586 - is called the Pentium. They have now gone back and added "i" to the beginning of their numbers so i486 just means a 486 made by Intel.

The Pentium is the most powerful PC with 64-bit addressing and able to handle 64 Terabytes - 6.4 x 1013 bytes or about 64,000,000,000,000 bytes (yes, I know 1k is 1,024) compared with the 8086's 1,048,576 bytes. A Pentium running at 66MHz will be nearly twice as fast as a 486DX2 at the same clock speed and about 225 per cent faster than a 486DX at 50MHz. So now you see why everyone wants one. MB

HARDWARE REVIEWS

Kelvin 64

If you've set your sights on a 32-bit graphics accelerator, then hold onto your horses until you've read what **Laurence Scotford** has to say about Orchid's new 64-bit wonder.

SCORE
90

Product:
Kelvin 64
**Manufacturer/
Distributor:**
Orchid
(Europe) Ltd
Tel: 0256 479898
RRP: £149 (1Mb);
£199 (2Mb)



IF YOU'VE bought a games PC, it's more than likely been supplied with a bog-standard VGA card that supports anything up to a resolution of, say, 800 x 600 with 256 colours. That's not exactly pushing current technology, but it's adequate enough, especially since many games still use the low-res 320 x 200 VGA mode, and those that do require SVGA usually don't venture beyond 640 x 480. But that's not going to be the case forever, so if you are considering updating your video card it makes sense to invest in something that's going to be relatively "future proof". The Kelvin 64 is exactly that, an SVGA accelerator that offers extremely fast graphics throughput and some unusual, but genuinely useful features. And at less than £200 for the top model, it's not going to put a serious dent in anybody's pocket.

The Kelvin 64 offers the sort of hi-resolution, photo-realistic SVGA modes you'd expect of cards in a much higher price bracket. The cheaper 1Mb option can support 640 x 480 with 65,536 colours, 800 x 600 with 65,536 colours, 1024 x 768 with 256 colours and 1280 x 1240 with 16 colours. If you decide to pay an extra £50 for the 2Mb option (or upgrade the on-board memory at a later date), you're treated to the full 24-bit monty: 640 x 480 with 16.8 million colours, 1024 x 768 with 65,536 colours and 1280 x 1024 with 256 colours. Of course, you'll need a decent monitor to reproduce the top resolutions, but Orchid has come up with a handy feature for Windows users with low-res monitors, which I'll explain in detail later in this review.

Safety first

Installing the Kelvin 64 is a breeze. We reviewed the 16-bit ISA version, but there are also 32-bit VESA local bus and PCI versions available. All three of them are equipped with a standard feature

connector, which you'll need if you want to connect your card up to something like a Reel Magic MPEG board. There is no hardware configuration (i.e. fiddling about with jumpers) to be done on the card itself. The only hardware adjustment you may have to make is to disable any graphics adaptor that is built into your computer's motherboard. Once the card is slotted into a spare 16-bit expansion slot and your monitor is hooked up, you can just switch on and go, and it will support standard VGA modes, or SVGA modes for any software that is supplied with its own VESA driver or a Kelvin specific driver. To use the SVGA modes with other software, you must install the drivers supplied on a single disk that comes with the card. Most of these are for business software, so won't be of much relevance to a games player, but you will want to install the Windows drivers.

One aspect of the Kelvin 64's installation process is that you can use a supplied utility to set the maximum vertical refresh rate that your monitor is capable of. The Kelvin will then refuse any mode changes that would involve running at a resolution not supported by the connected monitor. This is a potentially money-saving feature because overdriving a low-res monitor can damage both the monitor and the video card.

Virtual Windows

If you are a Windows user and you don't have a monitor capable of displaying the 1024 x 768 desktop, you can avail yourself of the

The Kelvin 64 is a small card with big bite.

Virtual Screen feature. This enables you to set up Windows with a lower resolution, say 640 x 480, but simulate a 1024 x 768 desktop. This means, of course, that part of the desktop is always off-screen, but whenever you move the mouse to the edge of the screen, the Kelvin 64 automatically scrolls on the unseen portion. And, since it's all done with hardware, it's super fast.

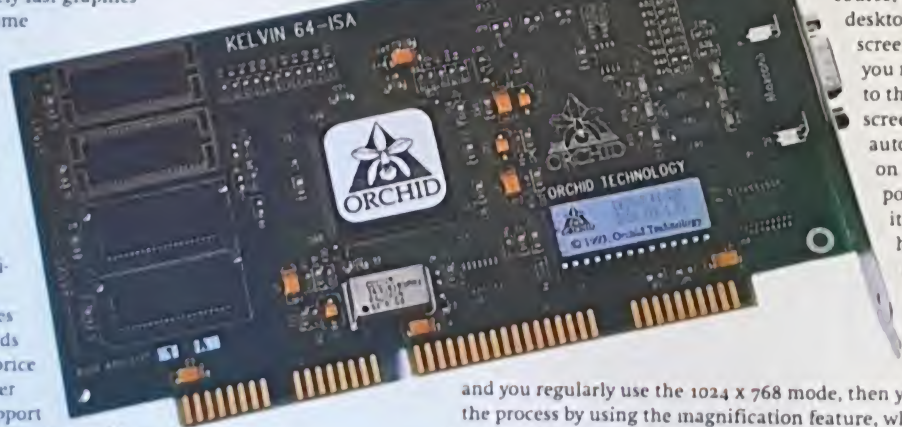
On the other hand, if you do have a top-notch monitor

and you regularly use the 1024 x 768 mode, then you can reverse the process by using the magnification feature, which enables you to zoom in on any portion of the desktop and zoom back out again as you wish. While neither of these features are particularly useful or necessary for games, they do come in handy if you also use other leisure software like paint programs.

As green as they come

Those of you who are concerned with all things environmental will be pleased to note that the Kelvin 64 has a Green PC feature. It conforms to the US Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star Standard, which substantially reduces your monitor's power consumption when it is idle.

The Kelvin 64 represents a cost-effective and worthwhile choice for game players who are looking for a powerful video option that will give good performance when more games begin to utilise the higher resolution SVGA modes. ■



Thrustmaster Formula T1 Driving Controls

As he drives a VW Beetle, we thought we'd give **Jeremy Wells** the chance to find out what it was like to drive a real car, or the next best thing, so we let him take the Thrustmaster Formula T1 Driving Controller for a spin.



I MUST ADMIT that I'm a bit of a driving games man and, when not sitting behind my desk making noises like a cat, I can usually be found

huddled over *IndyCar* with the sound whacked up, a hairdryer strapped to the top of my monitor and, if it's not raining, I'll toss an old tyre on the nextdoor's bonfire to get a nostril full of burning rubber every time the wind changes direction — all in the name of realism, you understand. The one big let down with just about every driving game on every platform, however, is the basic controls. Whether you use a joystick, mouse or keyboard, it's just not the same. Even if you hold your gamepad out in front of you and tilt it from side to side and shuffle your feet a bit, you'll most likely end up with a corrugated chassis or even being taking into care if your PC is somewhere near a window.

Mirror, mouse, manoeuvre

Flight sims are the same, but at least in most flight, space or chopper sims the plane, ship or whatever is usually controlled by a joystick of sorts, and therefore the movements are at least similar to those the pilot is required to make. What is more, most people have not and are never likely to be at the controls of a "real" plane or starcruiser and therefore have nothing with which to compare the PC experience. Driving games on the other hand are quite different. Most people are familiar with a car's controls, and as a result, when they sit down at the start of the Belgian Grand Prix with a mouse in front of them, they immediately feel that the game is altogether lacking somewhat in terms of realism. It might have the best texture-mapped graphics and sound this side of Silverstone, but you could hardly call huddling over a mouse the ultimate driving experience.

Behind the wheel

There are a few independent "steering wheel" type controls on the market, but these are usually limited to rather precarious affairs that still require the "driver" to fiddle around with fire buttons or keys, leaving their feet tapping in frustration. Not so with Thrustmaster's Formula T1. Not only do you get a stonking great steering wheel unit that incorporates a gear lever and a couple of fire buttons to stick onto your desk, but a completely separate pedal attachment with two pedals (accelerator and brake) that you sling on the floor for that total driving experience, as well.

As always with Thrustmaster equipment, the design of both units is more practical than pretty, but it's certainly all very sturdy, finished in a tough moulded plastic casing with metal where it matters, and it still manages to look pretty cool stuck to your desk. The dashboard unit can either be fastened to your desk via four suction pads, which are pretty unsubstantial if your driving style is anything more aggressive than the little old lady from Pasadena's. Alternatively, the unit can be fixed to your desk more rigidly by using the 3M Dual-Lock strips provided which absolutely clamp the

unit in place for slip free control. This does mean you have to put up with having two strips of what is essentially heavy duty Velcro at the front of your desk, but unless you've got particularly hairy arms, this shouldn't be a problem.

Under the hood

Both the dash unit and the foot pedals plug into each other which then plug into one port of any dual port game card (not a two-connector or two-plug game card). The instruction manual goes into great detail explaining what cards are best and how to get the unit to run most efficiently on your system, but it's probably best to give them a ring before you buy just to make sure. Thrustmaster of course, recommends its own ACM game card, which is speed adjustable and can handle most software, so if you haven't got yourself a decent card yet and want to get the most out of the T1, it's probably worth considering at just under £40.

The T1 unit can be used with any software that supports two joystick inputs, although if it uses only one you will at minimum be able to use the steering wheel and gear shift. Games such as *IndyCar* are already

compatible so it's simply a question of plugging in, calibrating the unit (a simple left and right affair) and you're ready to run. Most new games have support for the additional joystick input, allowing for the pedals and extra buttons to work. There is also an adaptor now available in the UK that converts most games to run with the T1, though I am assured by Thrustmaster that if all else fails, most companies are willing to create patches to update their programs to accommodate the complete unit.

Behind the wheel

Once you've used the Formula T1 unit with your favourite driving games, you won't ever want to go back to using your joystick, mouse or keyboard. It just won't be the same. There simply is no comparison between wrestling with a mouse, huddled over your desk and sitting back in your chair, foot to the floor, weaving in and out of the opposition as you fly off the grid.

All the controls are solid, responsive and easy to use. The wheel is a nice size and not too small, whilst the gear shift is neat and easy to handle. The pedals take a little getting used to, consisting of a metal lever and plastic fly-wheel which rotates as you press it down, mounted onto a large, metal box. At first you have to take care that your foot doesn't slip and fly off due to the unusual nature of the design. This is, however, soon mastered and there is plenty of room between the pedals for easy control — unless, that is, you wear wellies all the time.

If you're a driving game fan and love nothing more than a few laps of *IndyCar* or *Formula One Grand Prix*, then you should seriously consider investing in the Formula T1 unit. There are other, cheaper steering wheel add-ons currently on the market, but they really only tell half the story as most don't include foot pedals. As a result, if it's the complete driving experience you're after, the Formula T1 leaves them standing. It's well made, tough and, once you've set it up, easy to use. Once you've used it you'll never look at another mouse or joystick again. ■



SCORE

80

Product:
Formula T1
Driving Controls
Manufacturer:
Thrustmaster Inc.
Tel: (USA) 503
639-3200
Distributor:
RC Simulations
(0272 550900)
RRP: £149.95

(Above left) We're not talking mini-cooper shirt-button here — it really is quite big. (Below) Don't wear flip-flops if you expect to complete a lap.



HARDWARE REVIEWS

If you're into "games, music, sampling (and a little side dish of Doom from time to time)", then the Ultra Max is perfect for you.



Ultra Sound Max

Another month, another sound card.

David McCandless salivates over this month's new arrival – the Gravis UltraSound Max.



With its £30 512k RAM add-on, the max is an impressive deal.



Product: UltraSound Max
Manufacturer: Zye Technology
Distributor: Zye Technology
Tel: 0293 538666
RRP: £249



RAVIS Ultrasound users fall into two distinct camps. There are those (usually American) who place the Gravis' soundfx and musical prowess on a shiny golden pedestal and sing hymns at it on Sundays. And there are those who would gladly sacrifice their young children and coat themselves in goat's blood if the Sound Blaster emulation worked and the card didn't clash with every piece of hardware in existence. It's that simple. You either love it or you hate it. If it's love, then the foreplay of loading software drivers and mucking about with jumpers will be nothing compared to the orgasmic rush of excellently crisp samples, great sounding WaveTable instruments, pseudo 3D surround sound, and all sorts of modern day mod cons. If abject hatred is more your thing, then you'll loathe the unwieldy unstable sBOS Sound Blaster driver, despise the limited 8-bit only recording, and positively rupture your spleen over its manky dos software.

Nevertheless, the UltraSound has been, for a while, the best sounding card on the market. Games makers have been slow to catch on to this, but nowadays Ultrasound support is *de rigueur* on on all game installation menus. However, the card's "quirkiness" (polite term) and lack of simple necessities (i.e. CD-ROM interfaces) have kept it third or fourth in games players' "to buy" lists, especially now that Creative's superlative AWE-32 and Roland's RAP-10 cards are making big tractor-sized in-roads into the games playing world.

Max-O-La

And so comes the Gravis Ultramax – an updated, elongated, user-friendly ninja card, capable of everything the Ultrasound wasn't. That is: 16-bit recording, General Midi and Sound Canvas emulation, 512K RAM on board, and CD-ROM interfacing. It's directly pitched at the premiere games player, the budding composer, and the budget-minded sampler who might naturally think Creative or Roland when it comes down to the crunch.

What you get for your £229 (o.n.o.) is a very large red circuit board, similar in design to the original UltraSound, but with four centimetres added on the end for Sony, Mitsumi, and Panasonic CD-ROM interface sockets. As our psychotherapists will tell us, size isn't everything, but there's nothing more impressive than a big red blunderbuss of a sound card slotted deep in the throbbing innards of your PC. Size, however, can also be an annoying pain in the glands if your PC's design is a centimetre short of accommodating a full length ISA card. This is a common problem you should be aware of, especially in your average desktop and mini-tower cases.

As with the Ultrasound, the back-plate is resplendent with a standard game/MIDI port flanked by two audio in sockets (line and mic) and two audio out (one amplified for headphones, the other not). The bundle – six disks of utilities, plus two "bonus" disks – is packed with 11MB of drivers, utilities, demos and games.

For games released in pre-Ultrasound days, there are the sBOS

and MegaEM drivers. The new, more stable sBOS will emulate the Sound Blaster's clanky FM synthesis and 8-bit sample playback (but not Sound Blaster Pro or 16 ASP), while MegaEM provides full support for Roland MT-32, Sound Canvas, and General MIDI. The MAX will also make friends with standard UltraSound games and has its own "special" mode, for extra special sound quality.

Bundle city

To give you first-hand extreme close-ups of the Max in action, Gravis supplies the shareware versions of *Epic Pinball* and *Doom*. For musos and sample stars, the bundle also includes all manner of Windows and dos-based recording and playback utilities. Skipping over the awful dos Recording Studio (a garish, unfriendly and horrible sampling utility) and the monumentally tedious demo files included in the ULTRASND directory, you'll find a neat range of Windows-based apps, tailor-made for your Gravis' not unspecial sound skills. First up is SoundStation, a hi-fi style panel which coordinates MIDI, Wave, and CD songs to play, mix, record and generally bind together, with loads of counter settings, volume controls and fast forward buttons. It looks good but it's basically Windows dressing. On the creative side, three more creative tools await your perusal. As sequencers/drum machines go, PowerChords is quite unique, being, as it is, guitar based, aimed at Claptons rather than Claydermen. A few short demo tunes go far to convince you of its potential, but its esoteric front-end may baffle muso traditionalists. Recording Studio, however, is more your typical sequencer, with musical notations, events lists and all that MIDI hocus pocus. It's quite basic, but nevertheless a good first rung on that scary, mossy ladder of MIDI music. (What? Ed).

Wave Lite is a stripped down version of Wave For Windows, an excellent sound sampler and effects processor. The effects are absent in this version, but basic recording and waveform editing tools remain, giving you a chance to record huge amounts of CD quality samplers directly to your hard disk.

Games

The question gagging to be answered is: "How does the Ultramax perform in the games arena?". The answer is short and sweet: "Excellently." You haven't really played *Doom* until you've had the Max's 3D sound blaring through your headphones from the left and right, the front and back, and the above and below. (A quick example: I – the DoomMaster™ – was striding nonchalantly down a dim corridor when an imp leapt out in front of me. I jumped, I actually jumped, and got that squishy stomach feeling as this growling imp just appeared out of nowhere.) The effectiveness of the 3D effect is questionable: a lot of it is "ambient" rather than an "in your backside" wrap around effect. Flight sims, such as TFX and Tie Fighter, sound brilliant with gushing engine noises mixing effortlessly with sampled speech and explosions. Platform games sound as annoying as ever, but unsuspecting gems like *Epic Pinball* and *FIFA Soccer* have their atmosphere tripled by the Max's power.

The toss up

It's a toss up between the AWE-32 and the Ultramax. Digitally – for sound effects and speech – both deliver crisp, vivid samples in pseudo 3D surround. On the music side, the AWE inches slightly ahead: its General MIDI instrument set sound slightly cleaner and more realistic than the Max's. But the Max has more flexibility and ungradability than its Creative cousin, and will sample at 48KHz (DAT quality).

Summary

A superlative sound card with much to entice to the would-be musician as well as the gung-ho gamer. Highly recommended. ☑

Sound Blaster 16 AWE32

Sound Blaster's latest will let you talk to your computer, lay down some tracks, act like a synthesiser and turn gameplaying into a truly spiritual experience. **Mark Burgess** puts it through the hoops.



STRAIGHT OUT of the box, this card impresses. It's over a foot long. And size does matter with computers. It needs a full length 16-bit slot and fitting it was a breeze - none of those little metal lugs designed to catch on the case. Software installation was similarly painless, although you will need 4MB of hard disk space free. The Sound Blaster 16 AWE32 comes with a mass of software. Six HD disks cover everything from wave file manipulation to speech recognition. The first suite of programs is *Creative Ensemble*, which is a collection to play CDs, wave files and MIDI files from Windows. *EnsembleRemote* reduces screen clutter and controls any of the other three.

Creative WaveStudio manages the recording, playback and editing of wave files (mono, stereo, 8 or 16-bit) directly to disk. You can record from a number of sources simultaneously and edit includes echo, fade, amplification and reverb as well as simple cut and paste and more advanced effects.

The terribly-named *Creative Soundo'LE* embeds OLE objects directly into applications. *Creative Mixer* will control recording and playback from a multitude of sources with full control. There are two main control panels. The *Creative AWE32 Control Panel* deals with the card's synthesiser modes, controller settings and other settings. The *QSound Control Panel* lets you apply QSound effects to existing wave files. These can be "panned" anywhere in the QSound 180° environment.

Creative Mosaic is just a jigsaw with noises but the bundled software includes some serious programs. *Cakewalk Apprentice* is a well-known multi-track MIDI sequencer with music notation printing and piano-roll. *HSC Interactive* lets you create multimedia presentations but the really fascinating toy of the lot is *Creative's VoiceAssist*.

VoiceAssist provides command and control voice recognition for Windows. It has a vocabulary of up to 30,000 words and can support multiple users. *TextAssist* is the mirror image of *VoiceAssist*, giving a sophisticated text-to-speech capability based on DECTalk technology. Although the DEC protocol usually demands a DECTalk sound board costing about £1,200, the version bundled here has been adapted for the AWE32's signal processor and has nine pre-defined voices. Various applications will let you use speech in OLE server applications and there is *TextAssist Talking Scheduler* - a sort of talking Filofax.

There are nine voices in *TextAssist*; four male, four female and one prog. Betty is the cutsey female default, Kit is a fast talking defective kid, Wendy has a frightening exorcist-type whisper and Rita is a sexy female with a heavy cold (I hope that's what it is). It's still not convincing; although not as mechanical as other packages, the voices are still off in their rhythm and stress. It isn't helped by the fact that they are American voices and so have that strange rising intonation that makes every statement sound like a question. Of course, people who want their computer to read its

AUTOEXEC.BAT file deserve what they get and disabled users will be grateful for any help that they can get in dealing with their computers.

VoiceAssist is ideal for all those who shout at their computers, although there isn't an easy way to get it to recognise swear words as Windows commands. Once you've set it up for generic male or female the program coaches through the most common instructions - open, close, left - that sort of thing. To turn it off you just yell "Go to sleep!" at the computer and to re-activate it you shout "Wake up!". I found this the best fun of the programs supplied. All the programs come with full manuals.

Onto the important matter of games. It coped with all of them without any compatibility problems. The Roland emulation was impressive and as soon as games start using QSound - a sort of extra-depth stereo - it will blow your socks off. There is very little that this card can't do for you. Other firms - Turtle Beach, Gravis - have been chipping away at Sound Blaster's hegemony, but this card puts them back in front. The Sound Blaster AWE32 might not break any new ground, but it contains a wealth of features in a single, affordable package.

Compatibility

The acid test for any sound card is its compatibility. The Sound Blaster AWE32 is compatible with the complete Sound Blaster series, together with Roland GS & MT32 and General MIDI. Although MIDI recording and playback is done via Wave Synthesis, a OPL3 FM synthesis chip is on the motherboard for backwards compatibility. FM synthesis playback can be enhanced with the reverb, chorus and QSound effects.

Summary

Fully-featured sound card that will cover music and speech recognition as well as games effects. **A**

Creative Labs' impressive new card - seen here with the optional multimedia extras.



SCORE

90

Product: Sound Blaster 16 AWE32

Manufacturer/Distributor: Creative Labs

Tel: (0743 248590)

RRP: £199/£220

History Lesson

The first sound card for the PC was made by a small Canadian company, AdLib. The company had seen the possibilities in the Yamaha OPL FM synthesiser chipset and games programmers rushed to add authentic splat sounds to their efforts. Later, a Singapore company, Creative Labs, added digital audio and called its card Sound Blaster. The rest, as they say, is history. Just about every sound card now offers Sound Blaster compatibility.



OFF THE

BOARDS

Console games and pinball get the treatment from shareware. Mark Burgess is our man with the modem who keeps BT happy.

HOCUS POCUS

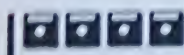
PREVIEWED last issue, *Hocus Pocus* is one of Apogee's best platform games to date. It's a bit like *Monster Bash*, but with the smooth VGA graphics of *Halloween Harry*. Your character is an apprentice magician who has to prove himself against various monsters. These include imps, ghosts, dragons, bats and tough end-of-level masters. There are puzzles such as combination switches and you need to watch your health throughout. You can pick up extra health and weapons as you go.

The game has excellent parallax scrolling, and Apogee's new sound engine sings like a bird. Strongly recommended. There are seven levels in the unregistered version. Registration brings 36 levels.

Shareware from: Apogee

Registration: £26.50/\$26.50

Needs: 386 or better and VGA



(Right) Guardians and phallid sculpture in Apogee's *Hocus Pocus*



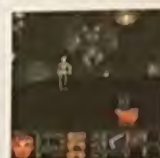
NIGHTMARE 3D

THIS is a first-person perspective version of *Hugo's House of Horrors*, but I don't suppose any of you can remember that. You wander around a haunted house, shooting spooks and witches with your plasma pistol or zapping them with spells. It's like a cross between *Ken's Labyrinth* and *Catacomb Abyss* with much harder puzzles. There are maps showing your location and those of the enemies, but they take up precious power. Health and weapons bonuses are sprinkled around but are usually hidden behind secret walls. Power-ups and pentacles of health need to be used sparingly or else you will find yourself up against beginning-of-the-level toughies with 15 per cent health and a nervous smile. Nice sound and graphics.

Shareware from: David Grey.
Registration: \$29.00.
Needs: 386 or better and VGA.



(Above) Flock wallpaper horror in *Nightmare 3D*.



(Left) Rooms full of goodies... (Top) ...and baddies.



Hocus Pocus: zap dwarf Argentinian footballers. (Look more like dwarf elephants to me. Ed)



ONE MUST FALL

ONE MUST FALL 2097 is tinned *Mortal Kombat*. You control a giant robot, pitted against other giant robots. There are ten of them, each with its special moves and skills. Some idea of what they do can be gathered from their names - Flail, Shreader [sic], Electra, Pyros and Thorn. You can be (or fight against) one of ten pilots ranging from those with staying power to pure sluggers. When you start out on the tournament career, you have a feeble machine and lousy reflexes. So you get beaten. As you gain more money from fights your robot can be developed into an unstoppable killing machine and your pilot can be sent to college to do a City and Guilds in Mayhem.

Special moves involve paralysing beams, electronic system scramblers and, of course, the grab-them-by-the-throat-and-torch-'em speciality of Pyros. Some of these moves need a special key combination (the up, up and left sort of thing).

The action, music and sound effects are brilliant and show how much work has gone into this game (and why it has taken so long). Control is easy with keyboard or joystick, but this is one game where the Gravis gamepad comes into its own.

Shareware from: Rob Elam for Epic Megagames.

Registration: £30.99.

Needs: 486 or better and 4MB RAM.



Right: Thorn connects you to the National Grid while Pyros (far right) warms your cockles. Loads of violence in One Must Fall

JAZZ JACKRABBIT

THIS is one of the best and fastest console-type games I've ever seen on a PC. Jazz Jackrabbit is in the long line of cutsey characters that run from hedgehogs (Sonic), fat plumbers (Mario) and definitely-not-ants (Zool). He has to run and jump from one bit of the screen to the other, shooting baddies (wasps, tortoises), picking up bonuses and staying alive. The action is difficult enough for you to keep playing, but not so tough you give up in disgust. Jazz has a good boppy soundtrack and lightning graphics - 60 frames a second scrolling (allegedly). One to give Zool a run for its money.

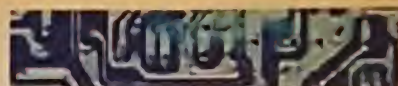
Shareware from: Arjan Brussee and Cliff Blezinski for Epic Megagames.

Registration: tba

Needs: 486 or better, 4MB RAM.



Console speed animation in Jazz Jackrabbit.



WHAT IS PUBLIC DOMAIN AND SHAREWARE?

PUBLIC DOMAIN



This is software that's free. You can copy and distribute it as you like. The only conditions are that you do not pass the work off as your own, do not incorporate it in another program without due credit and, of course, that you do not charge money for something you have got for nothing.

SHAREWARE



This is software that asks for a registration fee, either after a specific time or "if found useful". The fee varies enormously and you are morally obliged to pay it or stop using the program although it is true that many programs ask you to send \$5 to an address in Wichita. A leading shareware author recently estimated that about 90% of users don't register. Registration brings the latest version of the program, a place on the mailing list for updates and, often, a properly printed manual. Not to mention a warm glow of moral satisfaction.

OTHERS



Bannerware/Adware: These are programs where the author does not ask for any payment but reserves copyright. This means that you have a free license to use and copy the game.

DEMONSTRATIONS



Many commercial software houses will release a playable demo of their latest games so that you have some idea of what you're expected to pay £50 for. Not often found in libraries, they tend to live on the cover of magazines or on bulletin boards.

WHAT DO YOU GET?



The disk should contain a file called READ.ME or README.1ST. Read it by typing TYPE README.1ST | MORE. There will also be some sort of batch (.BAT) file in the disk. Typing in the name of it should load the program.

Most programs will come in archived form. This is because the library is trying to fit as much information as possible on a 760k disk. The files will have extensions such as .ARC, .ARJ, .LHA, .PAK, or .ZIP. However, the disk will come with a program that will decompress the files, together with instructions on how to use it.

TD 2192

AS WE'RE into comparisons this month: imagine a really good version of *Solar Winds* – one with more playability and interest – and cross it with *Raptor*. That gives you an idea of what *TD 2192* is about. You are Velasquez, a stropky pilot in the Traffic Department. The job doesn't involve towing away cars with invalid stickers – you drive a "skid" and keep the streets clear. How? By shooting everything. Your main enemy is the evil Vulture empire, which killed Velasquez's father. The game gives you the option of hearing Velasquez's insults in all their glory or you can opt for the bowdlerised version. I don't know whether the clean option works, and I doubt that anyone will try it.

There are 20 missions. Some are easy and some are very hard indeed. Some of them take place at night so they are both hard and confusing. There are three main craft; the Hornet, the Stiletto, and the helicopter. The skids have real inertia, which makes them difficult to control at first, but you soon get used to it. Later, because of the plot, you get to fight a Vulture ship.

Running through the game is a developing story. Alliances are made and broken. Vulture generals get executed on live tv for incompetence... you will often get missions where you must attack forces that were friendly in the one before. Your own life disintegrates and you start drinking heavily by around mission eight. Then you have a breakdown, steal a helicopter and get grounded for two weeks. Then you are kidnapped by the Vultures in mission 13. They brainwash you so you fight against your old buddies for a while. Then you break out again and for one mission you are firing at everything that doesn't fire at you. If you don't succeed in mission 15 then the game ends there. Otherwise, your helicopter is booby-trapped at the beginning of mission 19, leaving you horribly disfigured. Second to last has you on a suicide mission and the last showdown of all is with a huge mothership that can destroy asteroids.

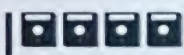
The plot really does add a great deal to the game, it isn't just tacked on as an afterthought with the *READ.ME* file. A thinking man's shoot 'em up.

Shareware from: Safari Software for Epic Megagames.

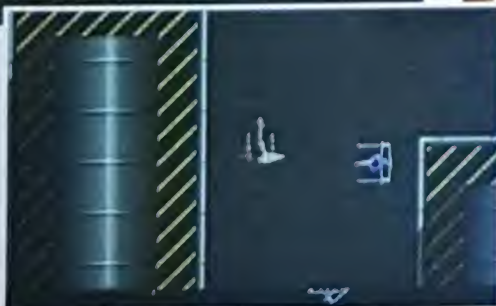
Registration: £26.99 from Epic (0767 260 903).

Needs: 286 or better, VGA.

Supports: SB, SB Pro and compatibles, Gravis gamepad or joystick.



Street cleaning in *TD 2192*.



TUBEWORLD

THIS IS A horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up from Germany. Pilot your ship from one end of the level to the other, shooting ships and gun emplacements and picking up bonuses on the way. Control is by mouse, keyboard or joystick/joypad.

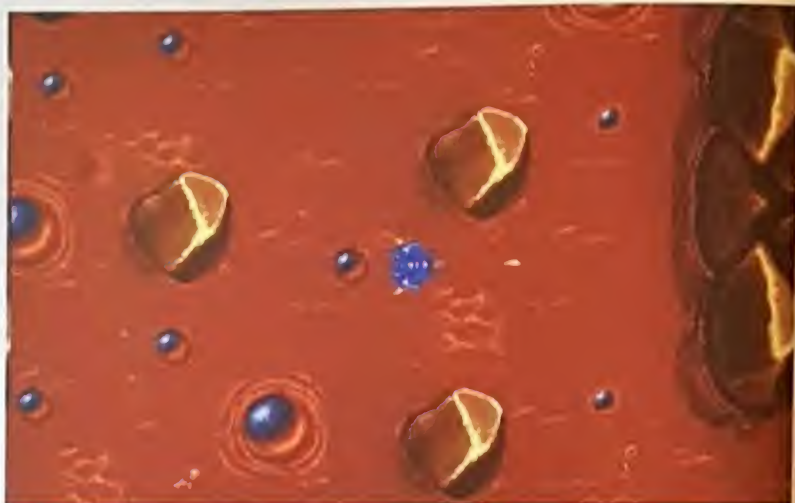
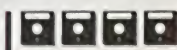
Good sound effects and a thorough test of your reflexes. One and two player options.

Shareware from: Dongleware & Creative Games Design.

Registration: Tbc

Needs: 386 or better, 4MB RAM, VGA.

Supports: SB, SB Pro and compatibles, Gravis gamepad or joystick.



(Above and right) Fighting your way through *Tubeworld*.



EPIC PINBALL THREE

THERE new tables for the shareware classic. In this package you get Toy Factory, Space Journey, Cyborgirl and Pangaea. They're all good and the disk comes with the executable file so you don't need previous episodes to play. Epic reckon they're going to call it a day for pinball after this, unlike a certain commercial software house I could mention. Trivia fans will be interested to know that Future Crew helped with the artwork.

Shareware from: James Schmalz for Epic Megagames.

Registration: £23.99 (£15.99 if you have 1 and 2, £45.99 for all three).

Needs: 386 or better, VGA.

Supports: 98, 98 Pro and compatibles, Gravis Ultrasound.



Cyborgirl and Pangaea.



Above: Space Journey.

(Right) Out of doors exercise in Doom II - Hell on Earth.



ID AND DOOM II

THERE is a menacing black block in the town of Mesquite, Texas. This is the home of iD, the team behind Wolfenstein and Doom, and they are about to stun the world yet again. Quake isn't expected until 1995 but it will be to Doom what Doom was to Wolfenstein. The main character carries a mighty hammer - like Thor - and strides through a vivid 3D world. An entirely new engine means that you can look up and down and that the characters are rendered as solids, rather than as boring ol' flat sprites. The difference between Who Framed Roger Rabbit? and Beavis and Butt-head.

In the meantime, the sequel to Doom - Doom II: Hell on Earth - is due soon. It has the same engine as the original, but 27 to 30 new levels and six new baddies have been added. Like the dreadful Spear of Destiny, Doom II will be a commercial release. Let's hope they get the pricing right this time.

iD consist of Jay Wilbur, who runs the whole operation, programmers John Romero (the real Doom king) and John Carmack, designer Sandy Petersen and artist, Kevin Cloud. Most of the team come from Softdisk - a strange outfit that produced a monthly disk of arcade games. Some of the team's early games were released last year as the "Lost Games Collection". While at Softdisk, Romero, John Carmack and Adrian Carmack (no relation) moonlighted for Apogee, coming up with Commander Keen.

The game was an overnight success and with their first royalty check the team decamped from Softdisk to set up their own company. It was going to be called IFD (for "Ideas From The Deep") Software, but this was changed to iD for ("In Demand") and eventually iD (the Freudian term for the inherited psychological impulses that form part of the unconscious).

iD lured Tom Hall from Softdisk and finished the Keen series. Then they got Jay Wilbur and Kevin Cloud from the same, haemorrhaging company and started Wolfenstein 3D. The rest is history.

Nearly two years on, Wolfenstein is still selling - where will Shadowcaster be in two year's time? Wolfenstein was originally to be called It's Green and Pissed and the player was to hunt down mutants in a biological laboratory. It was not to be. John reminded the team about an old Apple II game called Castle Wolfenstein where a US soldier had to escape from a castle full of Nazis. As a bit of luck, the copyright had lapsed so iD applied for it themselves. They reckon there are 1,000,000 copies of Wolfenstein out there. John Carmack is almost embarrassed about it now. "It was just a simple piece of work," he says, "Doom was just so much better".



Why do they continue with shareware? They are obviously better than most games teams. "I don't think you can be any closer to the consumer than in shareware" says Kevin Cloud. "Yeah," says Petersen, "but the main reason is greed". Out in the parking lot is Romero's yellow Testarossa. John Carmack has two.

WORD

processor

SEND YOUR POST TO: **WORDPROCESSOR, PC ZONE, 19 BOLSOVER ST. LONDON W1P 7HJ**



Skint 14 year olds Sellotaping HD disks, farty beeps emanating from speakers, double-standards on the part of anti piracy campaigns and

no Hornet for the UK are just some of the subjects tackled this month.

CL concern

In your July issue of *PC Zone*, in the intro to the CD-ROM Review section, you stated that some games will require a triple-speed drive. Having just parted with £200 for a double-speed drive, I was concerned to read this. Have I just wasted my hard earned cash, or will such a drive serve me well over the next two to three years? Also, now being broke, can you recommend a couple of titles that will use the CD-ROM drive to the best of its potential.

Keep up the good work with the magazine; to date, yours seems the most objective of the PC mags on the market.

T.I. Giblen, Norwich

We're glad you're finding the magazine useful, but rather sorry that you took our advice on CD-ROM drives in such an alarmed manner. So first, let us reassure you that your current CD drive is not a white elephant, it should last you for a good 18 months before you have to think seriously about replacing it. You will see the same sort of pattern with CD-ROM drives as you do with processors. As the latest models (DX2, Pentium) appear, then games do begin to appear which work best with that cutting-edge technology, but the majority of games will still work perfectly well with 386DX and 486 machines. The same will be true of triple- and double-speed drives. *Dune*, *Return to Zork*, *Sam & Max* and *Battle Isle II* are all good CD games which cover a multitude of tastes.

Victor Meldrew rides again

I'VE BEEN locked in Victor Meldrew mode for several days now and so, to save my soul and gently receding hair line, I thought "what better than to vent my frustrations through the pages of your megafab-tastic, in a PC-tabulous kind of way, magazine".

The reason for my perturbed state is *Evasive Action*. I bought this game several weeks ago. It was then I noticed several bugs. The stall sound was a horrible farty beep emanating from my PC speaker even though the game was using my Sound Blaster board. The start demo had no sound... the game crashed. So I rang Mindscape Technical Helpline to be told by some, let's just say "slightly underenthusiastic" person, "that's just the way it is" - Oh well, that's Okay then isn't it!

A few days later I tried using the game with a joystick splitter (just purchased). Only now, joystick B's calibration failed to work and locked up the game. Phone call time! "Yeah, we know about that. Drop us a line and we'll send you a patch disk."

Now I don't wish to appear pedantic or anything, but on a game where the two-player option is its main thrust and selling point, shouldn't they have P!!\$S'g checked it before it was released?

There, I can feel my inner calm returning now. Thank you for the space - rave on.

Phil Chapman, Peterborough

Well, I think *Mindscape* scores both good and bad points on this issue. Firstly, the bad point, which is that the game was evidently originally released in a rather unstable state. But the good point is that they do at least run a technical helpline which is easy to get through to, and that they have been able to fix the real problem with the game. (The sound problem is, after all, a nuisance, but it won't stop you playing the game.) However, I do agree that you should have been able to spend your money in the confidence that the publisher had made every effort to provide you with a fully-working product.

Doomed!

OH MY GOD, I'm having that terrible headache again and it's all *PC Zone's* fault. Last month I received with my favourite magazine, the *Doom* Level Editor. I installed it as usual and I saw the so-called "Hot New Level" and wanted to start designing levels. I printed the tutorial and I started as the tutorial instructed me, but the god damn tutorial doesn't explain how to use the *Doom* Level Editor in depth. So I tried to figure out how to use it myself and I saw the levels included with the editor. I sat for hours and hours and I still can't figure out how to use it. So the least you can do is send with your next issue a tutorial that teaches you how to use the editor and that is headache-less.

F.T. Amman, Jordan

We appreciate that the DEU editor is quite a complex piece of software and very daunting if you have never used anything of that nature before, and that's one of the reasons that we included a couple of different utilities for *Doom*, plus over 130 new levels and an in-depth tutorial for DEU on the cover-mounted CD on issue 17 (August 1994). If you missed that particular issue, you can order a back copy from Dennis Direct on 0789 490215.

Wot, no tab?

I LOVE your mag, but I have one niggle with it. I need a lot of HD disks for backing up files, saved games, etc. As I am only 14, my only income is pocket money, and that isn't much. So the way I get HD disks is via mags, but you've started taking out the tabs in your disks, forcing me to use Sellotape which could possibly foul up my disk drive.

If you don't start really listening to your readers you might lose them. A lot of my friends agree.

ps. Are companies making any more good games

that will run well on 286s and XTs.

Peter Haran, Douglas, Cork

Yes, we do occasionally use disks without write-protect tabs. We always try to source the best quality disks we can at a price that allows us to remain the most value for money magazine in the market. Remember that our HD edition costs you £1 less than all of the other PC games magazines that carry HD disks. That £1 you've saved is more than enough to buy you a blank HD disk!

As far as games for 286s and XTs are concerned, you are generally restricted to shareware games and budget re-releases these days. Check out labels like *Kixx*, *Hit Squad* and *Action 16*.

Card sharp

I'LL GET straight to the point. I bought, in May, one Highscreen AT bus DX2 66 with a 250MB hard disk, 4MB of memory and 128K cache memory. I also bought a Galaxy Pro 16 sound card. I'm quite happy with it but it only came with a Cirrus Logic 1/2MB SVGA card which is crap. Could you suggest a card that would speed up the screen update both in DOS and Windows? Would a local bus card make any improvement even though the machine only has an AT bus? On to another question. How do you rate the Galaxy Pro 16 sound card?

Andrew Strachan, Rutherglen, Glasgow

The first and most important point is: Don't buy a local bus video card. It's of no use to you unless you have a local bus expansion slot on your machine, which you don't. On the subject of video cards in general, no SVGA card will show any great improvement in games running under DOS. You should be looking for a card that gives good Windows performance and supports all standard VESA modes (since this is what most games are designed to be compatible with). You also want something with 2Mb of memory if you are planning to exploit the higher resolution modes. You might find that your Cirrus card is perfectly adequate if you just upgrade its memory to 2Mb. Otherwise, cards based on the Et-4000 W4P and STB Lightspeed chipsets are usually good value for money.

The Sound Galaxy NX 16 (which I'm presuming is the card you are referring to) is essentially a good low-cost alternative to the Sound Blaster 16. It has emulation options for a wide range of other sound cards, but since it is fully Sound Blaster compatible, you'll probably never need them.

Right on reply

This letter is an open reply to the letter Not So Sensible, from Dave Chapman, published in Issue 15, June 1994.

DEAR DAVE,

I was sorry to read of your experiences with *Renegade* and *Sensible Soccer* as outlined in your letter to *PC Zone*. We aim to reply to all letters and telephone enquiries and I'm sorry if your letter slipped through the net.

In reply to your query, most of the faults outlined in your letter have been corrected in an updated version of *Sensible Soccer*. The other things, such as

the ease of goal scoring are due to you playing on a 286 machine. If you send your disk back to me at Customer Services, I will replace it with the correct version free of charge, which is what should have happened in the first place.

I apologise for any inconvenience caused and hope Sensible Soccer lives up to your expectations in the future.

Sarah Tanser, Customer Services, Renegade, C1 Metropolitan Wharf, Wapping Wall, London, E1 9SS. Tel: 071 481 9214. Fax: 071 480 5690

Potential Sensible Soccer purchasers should check out the review of the latest version elsewhere in this issue.

Notes and queries

I HAVE every PC Zone issue, and I'm trying to form an effective database to catalogue them. I am trying to cross-reference them, so one could type in a game and the database would detail which magazines it is mentioned in, and in what context, e.g. the score, the magazine issue it was reviewed in etc. Do you know of a suitable shareware product that could do this? If I was to collate this info, would you put the information out on a cover disk?

Following on, I notice you have stopped listing games in the back of the magazine as long ago as issue 5, presumably as it was taking up so much space. Why not publish a list of games reviewed, and scores, bi-annually, with complete listings cross-referenced by genre?

Andrew Zucker, Borehamwood, Herts.

We are in the process of creating a comprehensive issue database which will be updated on a regular basis, and we will certainly consider publishing this annually on the cover disks. If you are still keen on creating your own personal database, we recommend you look at PC File v5 from Buttonware. This is an excellent database which rivals many big name packages. The shareware version should be available from any large shareware library or bulletin board. As always, we do urge you to buy the registered version if you find that PC File suits you.

DIY games

I am wondering if you can help me in my search for a book which covers games programming, including details such as reading from joysticks and sound output. Alternatively, would you know of any shareware disks that would help. (I use Turbo C++).

Craig Smith, Camberley, Surrey

Yes, you've come to the right place, guv. Flights of Fantasy is an excellent book by Christopher Lampton. It teaches 3D games programming by detailing the construction of a simple flight simulation program. It's published by The Walte Group at £32.16. Its ISBN is 1-87873-918-2. Another volume you might want to check out is Creating Turbo C++ Games by Clayton Walnum. It's published by Que at £27.99 and its ISBN is 1-56529-472-6.

Both of these books come with 3.5" HD disks with code that can be compiled with the Turbo C++ compiler.

Hornet loses its sting

ON READING your review in issue 15, June 1994, I couldn't wait for the new Falcon 3 add-on (Hornet: Naval Strike Fighter) to be released.

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Face the Music

You've said it before and you'll say it a thousand times; there is no justification for software theft. However, and there's always an "however", how many of these poor, ripped-off programmers, publishers and software house investors own cassettes which have been recorded from somebody else's LP/CD? In the car, in the home, they've been ripping off musicians for years. While we're on the subject, how many of the cassettes in the possession of PC Zone employees are pirate copies?

That's the gripe, now the query. Do programmers get royalties? If not, then who receives the revenue from registered software? Could it possibly be the shareholders of Imagesoft, Ocean, et al? The people who have nothing to do with the talent and work involved? I'm not saying their investment shouldn't be rewarded, but in the music business, company and artist share the royalties. I'd like to think this was the case in the software business. Please advise.

Supplementary query: as the bottom falls out of the console market, small independent games shops are expanding their PC stock and dealing in second-hand software. Likewise, second-hand record shops. Now, I come along and for £15 I buy a second-hand copy of, say, *X-Wing*. No manual, but in the box is a piece of paper with all the key functions and a list of the 32 passwords... hang on, 32 passwords doesn't strike me as a serious piece of anti-piracy protection. Could this be a tacit acknowledgement that games are overpriced? The programmer gets his salary anyway and he wants as many people as possible to be playing his game. A lot of games don't have any passwords, including the current bestseller *Sim City 2000*. So why does *Elite II* have a stupid novel written specifically for data protection? Why bother writing it? Why not just use the Bible? You know, "Input code-word Revelations ch.3 v.4 word 5." It took so long to find the codeword that I'd stopped playing it before I'd even started. It's in the second-hand shop now.

Steve Belop, Edinburgh

Well, I have to agree wholeheartedly with your first point. In fact, there is even less justification for making pirate copies of records because they are so much more affordable than games. And yes, it's true that I do have copies of records in my collection, but I can genuinely say, hand on heart, that they are all copies of LPs which I own and which I've transferred to cassette for convenience. I'm probably one of many people who doesn't pirate music because LPs, CDs and cassettes are comparatively affordable. Which brings me nicely on to your last two points: the price of software is almost certainly a major factor in casual piracy, and it is these casual pirates that copy protection systems like that in *Elite II* are designed to deter, and as you say, they are often more successful at annoying legitimate buyers.

I phoned Premier Mail Order to place my order and was stunned to find that the add-on was not going to be released in this country, only in the US. "Why not?" I said. "It's because of the Bosnian/Yugoslavian missions," I was told. Surely not!

If that was the case you would not have reviewed it, or at least said something.

Please find out why the UK should be denied this add-on when the US can have as many as it wants.

Martyn Bowle, Redhill, Surrey

Premier Mail Order was perfectly correct in what it told you. MicroProse UK has decided that the current conflict in former Yugoslavia is such a sensitive issue at present that it would not be appropriate to release the Hornet add-on in this country. Some mail order companies will import copies of games that are not available in the UK if you're prepared to pay a hefty surcharge. Otherwise, your best course of action would be to call Spectrum Holobyte in the states on 0101 510 522 3584 and order a copy from them directly with a credit card.

At the time we reviewed the game, MicroProse had still to decide whether to release the game in the UK. ☒

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Dragon Shard version 2.1b

is a mouse-controlled EGA role-playing adventure game in the *Ultima* style. It's designed to expand in a "modular" fashion so that when you have completed the quests in this introductory module you can continue your adventures in other modules. It features ten character races, 17 character classes, magic items and spells, interaction with monsters and non-player characters, hundreds of weapons, potions and herbs, shops, and much more. The shareware version restricts adventurers to the fifth level of experience.

● Order ref: B3866

Monster Bash

is a VGA resolution platform-jumping arcade game from Apogee in the tradition of their best-selling *Commander Keen* and *Cosmo* games. Johnny Dash must use his catapult to repel undead monsters in his quest to free stolen pet dogs and cats held by the evil Count Chuck. Johnny can climb, crawl, shoot his catapult, fly a broom and much more.

● Order ref: BH212

Ken's Labyrinth is a 3D 256-colour VGA arcade adventure game. You have been captured by the Zogarians and must escape their labyrinth in order to rescue your dog,

Sparky, and save the known Universe. Supports Gravis Gamepad control, and a musical soundtrack with

AdLib or Sound Blaster cards.

● Order ref: BH218

The Blade Runner Disk version 1.1

for film fans. It includes a *Blade Runner* quiz program with four levels of difficulty, a Wilbur Mercer simulator, random quotes program, 514 x 463 greyscale image of Rachael, 432 x 718 and 784 x 458 2-colour images of the film poster. Plus a text file of *Blade Runner* info, including cuts and continuity errors in the film. (Public Domain disk)

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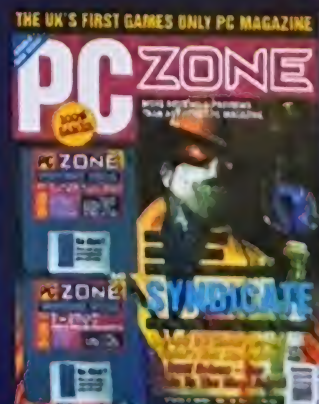


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Mr Cursor

HE'S AFRAID OF PEOPLE WHO GUESS

THE "Interactive Movie". Bleeuuuuurgh! It's a really annoying term, isn't it. It annoys me, anyway. Think of all the total bumwipe you've read about these things to date... so-called "experts" telling you what is (and what isn't) going to happen in the future. But it's all crap. All of it. It's just people guessing, basically, and more often than not the people doing the guessing are complete aresholes, and wouldn't know a good guess (or game) from a bad guess (or game) even if it materialised on their left shoulder and announced its intentions in 39 different languages (including semaphore and Welsh). Exactly how things are going to go in the future is unknown. It's a fact nobody should forget. The periodic table, for instance, might ultimately be found to be a small corner of a much larger periodic table that sort of wraps round on itself in nine dimensions or something. And oh-so-slow speed-of-light electromagnetic wave communications might be superseded by the discovery of gravity wave technology, giving way to the possibility of instantaneous interstellar communication. You might end up with a small controlled black hole inside your PC casing. And on and on and on. Know what I mean?

So at the end of the day nobody knows diddly about what'll happen regarding "interactive movies". Prince Charles doesn't know, Damon Hill doesn't know, Stephen Hawking doesn't know, the blind bloke who writes for the *New York Times* computer section doesn't know, and you can be doubly sure that Mr R. Sheepworrier of 15 Denzil Road in Gwent doesn't know either.

But guess what?

I do know!

Yes, that's right. I, Mr Cursor, am the only person in the world who actually knows the way things are going to go with "interactive movies" (bleeuk!!!). And the reason I'm the only person in the world who knows this is because I'm sort of "magic", and can travel through time at will (without even the need of a machine). Yes, I know it sounds a tad far fetched, and in your shoes I probably wouldn't believe it either, but think about it for a second. Think about the fact that a lot of people actually believe in the Bible, and the tooth fairy, and leprechauns, and the National Health Service and so forth. You see? So why should it be so hard to accept that I have been to the future? Especially when I can offer you proof like this: the 4.30 at Kempton Park on the 13th July 1998 will be won by Stalin's Teeth. (And if you want to win the accumulator on the same day then it's Pink Polyester, All For One One For All, Slippery In The Head, the aforementioned Stalin's Teeth, and then Bibble Bibble Bibble). Get the picture? I'm offering you a chance to make millions in four years time, and all I ask in return is that you bear some credence to my claims now, in 1994. Yes? A deal?

I have seen the future...

Anyway, whether you're with me or not, here's how the "interactive movie" crack will go - courtesy of excerpts of an interview I conducted with a top software geezer called Bob, in the year 2023.

Me: Back in the old days a lot of people used to look at the difference between the black and white silent films of the 1920s and the talking, colour, stereo movies of the latter part of the same century... and then kind of try to extrapolate. They used that, er, "equation" (if you like), to explain how computer games would progress as time went on.

Bob: A logical framework, yes. I would probably have done the same, I suppose. Then again maybe I wouldn't.

Me: But anyway, so where did they go wrong?

Bob: Well, it was in assuming that programmers and designers would continue to write complete self-contained plots. Beginnings, middles and endings and so on. That kind of stuff kind of bogs you down. You'd be placed in a rut. Then you moved to another rut, and

so on. Eventually a player would see the ruts and would become dissatisfied. Really interactive stuff has an infinite number of ruts. Like life. You can't code that, it's just not possible. It'd take forever, and even then you'd have to miss bits out.

Me: So when did we start to get it right?

Bob: I think it was about the same time that everyone was finally on the internet. The home-based VR equipment helped visually, but the main point was that we actually had humans interacting with other humans, in real-time, and using their own voices. It was all to do (and still is) with unpredictability, which is still what humans are best at. There are rules in the games, sure, but at the end of the day there also aren't any rules. (If you know what I mean.)

Me: Aaaaah!!! Yes!!! I do know what you mean. We had this four-player game called *Doom*! We always said it was like an interactive Arnie movie: no plot, but lot's of action. You could type messages to one another and co-operate, or just kill, kill, kill. You could cheat and lie and so on. You kind of made your own plot. (A bit.)

Bob: I expect you could, and I'm very pleased for you, but we don't really go in for such small games these days. For instance, the chart-topping internet movie at the moment is called *Universe 3*. We've got 250,000 players on-line - and there are 90 versions of the game currently underway... all based in different systems within the universe, obviously. The top group at the moment are on the planet Zoop (we think)... there are 5,000 members, and their leader is a guy called Allen Se. He's become something of a pain, actually. Him and his bunch have slaughtered all our minor A1 units and have simply helped themselves to much of the technology on offer. We're thinking about sending in some major A1 units to bring them down a peg, but we're a bit stretched on manpower at the mo. Our main concern is that we suspect they've invented bio-siles. And it's even possible that they've left the planet and have booby trapped it. Yes, this Allen Se is pretty good, unfortunately. We've heard reports of members of other groups signing up with him.

Me: Oh no! It sounds like a sort of high-tech Multi-user Dungeon: the sort of thing I always took the piss out of, back in my own time.

Bob: I don't know about that, but I can tell you this... you can get killed in an internet movie, and then you can't log back onto the same one again for six months - unless you use someone else's ID card, of course. There are hand-to-hand battles on planet surfaces, massive space battles involving billions of ships, everything.

Me: Yes, but what about the plot? The story? How does that work?

Bob: We just imply things. There are some trump cards and ultimate goals hidden away, I'll admit, but they're not easy to find, and the general rule in most games is to become the richest, the biggest, the most feared and whatnot. Our designers design the basic landscapes and our writers simply suggest the plot. It's the users that call the tune. The way technology is accelerating, though, I can't even guess what'll happen in the future.

Me: I can, because I can travel through time at will, without even the need for a machine. Oh, and I've been meaning to ask, what's the point of that stupid trunk-like thing sticking out the side of your head?

Bob: Stupid trunk-like thing? What are you talking about? It's the fashion, matey: ear-tubes are right in at the moment. You're the one who looks ridiculous.

Me: Yeah? (Yawn.) I'm quite tired actually.

Editor's note: At this point, the drugs Mr Cursor has taken all wear off simultaneously and he falls asleep. When he finally awakens he realises it has all been a fantasy-land experience, that he's still in boring old 1994, that he's unable to travel through time... and that everything is shit and that everyone still thinks CD is the only way forward in games. He writes a letter to the BBC programme *Points of View* to complain, and then goes back to sleep. ☹



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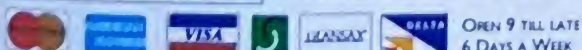
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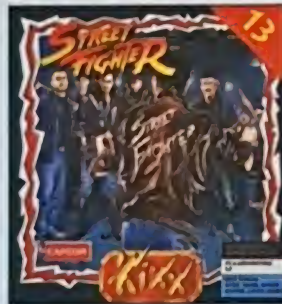
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